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DAME REBECCA BERRY.

VOL. I.

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VOL. I.

LONDON :
Printed by A. & R. Spottiswoode,
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✓ S.F. 1827. 112
DAME REBECCA BERRY,

OR,

Court Scenes

IN THE REIGN OF

CHARLES THE SECOND.



" Let not that devil,
That cursed curiosity, seduce you
To hunt for needless secrets, which, neglected,
Shall never hurt your quiet ; but, once known,
Shall sit upon your heart, pinch it with pain,
And banish the sweet sleep for ever from you.
Go to : — be yet advised."

JANE SHORE.

" What then ? Things do their best, — and they and we
Must answer for the intent, and not the event."

OLD PLAY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR

LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, AND GREEN,

FATERNOSTER-ROW.

1827.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

It may be necessary to state, (in order to avoid the imputation of fruitless vanity,) that nearly the whole of the following pages were written before either “Brambletye House” or “Woodstock” made their appearance ; but (from peculiar circumstances) were *not* published *then*, and are, from circumstances equally peculiar, published *now*.

Having mentioned this, any apology to the public, for entering upon a path which has been so brilliantly and successfully illuminated by the authors above-

named, would, indeed, be as superfluous a piece of candour and contrition, as that of the man who begged Voltaire's pardon for stealing one of his *bon-mots*, after he had rendered it so pointless, as to make it impossible the original owner should either detect the theft, or wish to claim the waif. Moreover, it is to be hoped, that a person might tread the classic ground of Thermopylæ, without having it supposed that he imagined he should, as a matter of course, on that account, be taken for a Leonidas; on the contrary, his only feeling would be, that its hero, in leaving him his deeds to admire, had destroyed the power of imitation. What is unique, cannot be copied; what is much above us, cannot be reached; and the *palpably impalpable* Author of *Waverley* is, in the literary world, what

the shade of Theseus *was* at Marathon, an invisible and mysterious, but all-conquering power ; while Mr. Horace Smith, like the Ladye Christabell's champion, has obtained such proud vantage-ground, that few writers could be bold enough to contend with him.



DAME REBECCA BERRY.

CHAPTER I.

Let no man seek
Henceforth to be foretold what shall befall him.
MILTON.

SIR Ambrose Templeton, a knight of ancient family, resided on the estate of his ancestors, which was situated in the West Riding of Yorkshire. His castle, like himself, was sequestered and gloomy. A disappointment in early life had given him a distaste for society. From that period he became a misanthrope. Devoting his time to the science of astrology, he entered with eagerness into all its mystical arts, imagining he could foretel a thousand

events, which alone existed in his own disturbed fancy, by endeavouring curiously to pry into that futurity wisely hidden from mortal ken.

Even a mind the most abtracted requires some recreation, some species of amusement to divert the attention. There was only one in which Sir Ambrose indulged ; it was horsemanship.

Frequently in his evening rides he passed a farm-house, called Green Meadow. As he passed, he usually stopt for a few minutes to remark a beautiful child, either playing on the grass, or borne in the arms of a young damsel. There was something so attractive in the little girl, in the innocent vivacity of her look, and her infantine sportiveness, he almost felt inclined to disencumber her parents from the care of bringing her up, and, by adopting her himself, instruct her in that occult science, the study of which quite absorbed him.

Farmer Russell was one of Sir Ambrose's tenants; he had a numerous offspring; therefore, no doubt, he would be willing to part with the little Rebecca, to be so well provided for.

Having once entertained this whimsical idea, Sir Ambrose foresaw nothing to impede his purpose; and at length resolved to name his intention to Farmer Russell and his dame.

Joseph Russell was a substantial man; much respected, and looked up to, by the humble class of community for the honesty and integrity of his character. He was active and industrious to a proverb. Farmer Russell was seen toiling early and late, and always cheering his fellow-labourers by his active example, good humour, and merry song; for he had ever something cheering to say; and even the most necessitous were readier to serve him than those who gave larger pay.

No part of England can vie with

Yorkshire for the peculiar neatness, cleanliness, and persevering industry of the lower class of its inhabitants. They are considered shrewd and discerning, almost to a fault. But it must be remarked, that the extreme wretchedness, filth, squalid look, and indigence, so prevalent in some of the western counties, are rarely to be seen in Yorkshire. Hence prosperity and comfort crown the labour of the husbandman. The wife takes care to feed and clothe the children, and contributes her part in the occupations of the day.

Dame Russell was the pattern of every homely virtue. Her children were active, sprightly, and healthy. She was an admirable housewife, and so well understood the management of her dairy, she never returned from market with any of her stock on hand.

In the year 16—, the period at which the following events commenced, refinement and luxury had not made such

rapid steps into community. The honest farmer was content to eat his brown barley bread, and quaff his home-brewed ale, and instruct his family in that humble station to which they were born. Education had not perverted the mind of the simple country girl. She aimed not in acquiring accomplishments, fitted and intended only for young ladies of fortune and condition. She remained guileless and content in her lowly state, and fulfilled the duties of that state with industry and satisfaction.

Neither did the misguided parents by their ill-judged tuition in refined and superficial attainments render their children useless and discontented members of society, by elevating them above that humble sphere which they were born to fill.

Joseph and Rebecca Russell had a large family of sons and daughters. The little girl noticed by Sir Ambrose

Templeton was the last of their offspring. *

They were a happy and a thriving family notwithstanding former depression of fortune, and the Almighty blessed their labours. They ate the bread of contentment, and it sweetened their industry.

Sir Ambrose was too powerful a man in the county not to command the obedience of his tenantry; and though he was considered austere and eccentric, he was on many occasions so humane and indulgent to the necessitous poor, that his word proved a law amongst them. Hence Farmer Russell was afraid to refuse the knight's request to adopt his child Rebecca, though to part with her grieved him sorely.

* Rebecca Russell was the youngest daughter of a farmer in Yorkshire. Her life was long, and marked with many particulars, that evince the governing hand of Providence in human affairs. Her father's family were opulent and independent, but, unfortunately for his children, had fallen into decay. — *Old Tradition.*

The humble couple fondly loved their children ; for the little Rebecca they had a peculiar fondness. She was not only the youngest of their offspring, but her mother had nearly lost her life in giving her birth. When Sir Ambrose Templeton made the offer of educating, and handsomely providing for her, the struggle her parents endured ere they finally consented to resign her to the knight was most painful. Sir Ambrose's eccentric character, stern and abstracted manner, gave him the appearance of austerity ; and throughout the neighbourhood he was more feared than beloved.

A reluctant consent being yielded, Dame Russell having in vain warmly contested the point with her husband, the child was sent for by the house-keeper, attended by elder sister Ruth, to Gloomore Castle.

On Rebecca's arrival at the castle, the knight lavished on her so many caresses,

and the housekeeper such an abundance of attention, that in the space of a week all desire of home vanished from her infantine mind ; and she became fonder of Sir Ambrose and Mistress Watkins, than sister Ruth, who in due time was sent back to Green Meadows Farm.

CHAP. II.

THE young Rebecca each day became more beautiful and engaging. Naturally of a delicate constitution, like a tender exotic, care, regular hours, and proper diet, gave a healthful glow to her cheeks, and elasticity to her movements; and she became one of the loveliest spring flowers that ever opened its blossoms under the influence of a genial sun. Her strength increased; her complexion, fair as the mountain snow, was no longer tanned; her laughing eyes sparkled with gladness, and her black hair turned into a thousand fantastic curls over her face and neck. The pretty lisping dialogue, full of innocent mirth, flowed in such a soft dulcet voice, as engaging as it was persuasive; and a few months' residence at Gloomore Castle, rendered her a beautiful and captivating child.

Her parents from the time of her adoption were interdicted from seeing her, that they might not wean her affections from Sir Ambrose ; therefore they were compelled to be satisfied with Mistress Watkins's account of their child's happiness, improvements, and surprising beauty, which in the visits she condescended to pay them, she was most lavish ; as also on the indulgence which the knight bestowed upon her.

Farmer Russell sometimes heard all Mrs. Watkins's praise of his little daughter with sullen discontent, exclaiming, " Handsome is that handsome does. I don't care a rush for the beauty you talk so much about ; it mayhap will prove her greatest misfortune ; and, as the patriarch Jacob said, '*bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.*' Will Rebecca, do you think, Mistress Watkins, remember her poor father and mother when she is not suffered to see them, and not even to hear their blessing ? I'll

tell you what, Mistress Watkins," he continued, "if Sir Ambrose keeps our child from us much longer, I shall just make bold to go to Gloomore Castle, and ask for Rebecca; for she cannot be so dear to the knight as she is to her father and mother."

Mistress Watkins, afraid on this occasion that she had gone too far, and she might draw down the knight's displeasure, made a rash and hasty promise to Dame Russell, that she should see her child whenever she chose to come to the castle.

Rebecca daily increasing in Sir Ambrose's affection by her winning ways, rendered him anxious to pry into the future destiny of so fair a creature. Though of late she had somewhat beguiled him from that study to which he was so wholly devoted, his mind was not less deeply warped than ever in those mystical subjects in which he considered himself so conversant and familiar.

In a luckless moment he determined

to cast Rebecca's horoscope, to study the state of the planets, whether or not their situation was favourable, and denoted prosperity during her future life.

He eagerly withdrew to his laboratory, situated in a remote turret, on the top of which was placed a large telescope for the contemplation of the heavenly bodies. A small orrery hung round the interior, and on a long table stood globes, mathematical, and astrological instruments, with various chymical preparations. There were besides a pile of large volumes, many half moth-eaten, containing hieroglyphical characters, with others written in the old black letter, on the most obscure and rabbinistical subjects.

The knight wore when engaged in his laboratory a large crimson velvet wrapping gown, embroidered with hieroglyphical figures, confined with a belt worked with the signs of the zodiac. A high fur cap covered his head; his large

bushy eye-brows, locks of jet, and full mustachoes, and dark sallow complexion, gave him, when thus attired, the air of a magician ; and he so completely scared his household, they as cautiously avoided the laboratory as if an evil spirit actually dwelt there.

More than once the little Rebecca, who was a stranger to fear, endeavoured softly to creep after him ; but Mistress Watkins quickly caught her up in her arms and carried her to a distant part of the castle, to divert her from her purpose.

The knight having found the planet under which the child was born, cast her nativity.* The mystical figures presented in the horoscope, denoted according to the planetary world, an event of so extraordinary and improbable a nature, he fell back in his chair, stag-

* He perceived by the planets that this little girl was born to a wonderful fortune, and at last to be his wife. — *Old Tradition.*

gered with amazement, and immediately questioning, for the first time in his life, his knowledge in a science of which he thought himself the master.

Again he cast and recast the mystical figures into other forms, but they still in aspect predicted the event which filled him with such astonishment. Disconcerted and dissatisfied at the singular aspect they wore, in which his own destiny appeared to be closely united with that of Rebecca's, Sir Ambrose was convinced there must be some error as to the date of the child's birth; for the event predicted, as far as concerned himself, he was resolved should never be fulfilled. To defeat that event, clearly as the stars predicted, he was determined, even though Rebecca were made the sacrifice.

Having for several hours deeply pondered on the mysterious subject, and certain the time Rebecca was born had been falsely stated, he ordered his horse,

and rode with impatient anxiety to Green Meadows Farm, that he might ascertain the year, day, and hour, in which her mother gave her birth.

Sir Ambrose's wild abstracted appearance, stern and hurried manner, when he entered the farmer's hall, terrified the placid dame, who approached with timid steps, and, humbly curtsying, demanded his pleasure.

"At the peril of your life," he said, vehemently, "answer with truth the question which I am going to ask."

The good woman turned pale with alarm, diffidently but firmly replied, "She had never told an untruth in her life, nor would she, whatever might be the question His Honour was pleased to put." He then demanded, fixing his eyes upon her, the exact date of her daughter Rebecca's birth.

Dame Russell immediately brought out of a press the large family bible, and spreading it open on the table before the

knight, turned to the leaf, and pointing her finger to the last name, written in good round hand by her father, according to the custom of having the births registered in the sacred volume, said, "There you may see our dear Rebecca's."

Sir Ambrose read it again and again; his senses became so bewildered, the letters seemed to swim before his eyes.

He started from his seat, and putting his hand to his forehead, exclaimed, "Then the stars have rightly predicted;" at the same moment rushing abruptly out of the house, and mounting his steed, flew along the road with the swiftness of a madman.

The recent scene appeared to the placid Dame Russell more like a delusion of the imagination than a reality. She could scarcely believe that Sir Ambrose Templeton had been at their farm. When she mentioned the circumstance to her husband, who, on his return home

observed something had ruffled her, he told his wife the noble knight must either be mad or intoxicated; but that the neighbours talked so oddly about his strange ways, and of his getting out at the top of his house in dark nights, and looking at the stars till morning dawn, or shutting himself up for whole days together, almost without food, suffering no person to come near him, he had no doubt, sometime or another, Sir Ambrose would be clapt up in a madhouse.

“As for our dear child, Rebecca,” Farmer Russell continued, “it is quite melancholy, she is in the power of such a crazy person. It makes my heart ache whenever I think of it. I would rather work my flesh to the bone, for the support of my children, than let little Rebecca remain with His Honour. I shall take an opportunity of speaking my mind, even if it gives offence, and he takes the farm from me.”

Dame Russell wept for joy at her husband's declaration. She pined to have her child Rebecca home. What would it add to their happiness, taking her out of her humble station, except to despise her lowly parents?

CHAP. III.

SIR Ambrose, on reaching Gloomore Castle, retired to his observatory, and, once again, spreading the mystical figures before him, was as much puzzled and confounded as before; for they predicted to his superstitious mind, and to his conception of the occult sciences, that the future destiny of Rebecca was involved, in a very extraordinary manner, with the most important event in his own life: indeed, so closely were they connected, it seemed impossible to separate the one from the other.

Such, however, is the perversity of human nature, that separated he was resolved they should be. He would set at defiance the whole of that system on which, till now, he had placed the most implicit faith, and he had believed alone, ruled the destiny of man. Sir Ambrose

was not only a predestinarian, but he was convinced that mankind were the creatures of *fate*. He put no trust in that all-wise, that all-ruling Providence, which can alone guide and direct the life and actions of his creatures.

None of Sir Ambrose's household, except that lately fondly cherished child, dared break in upon that privacy, in which now, for days and nights together, he indulged. He wore an abstracted air the most appalling ; he took his solitary morsel only at broken intervals, forbidding, on pain of his everlasting displeasure, any of his domestics venturing to disturb him.

It was now the third day since he had totally excluded himself, when his darling little girl, missing him for so long a time, softly crept up stairs, and standing partly within the door, which gently and timidly she had opened, watched him for some minutes ; when Sir Ambrose suddenly up, and, with scowling brow, and

eyes that shot fire, met the ardent gaze of the young Rebecca, who had stood immoveable, till, with a sudden spring, she stretched forth her little hands, and darting forward, threw herself on his knee with a look of gladness ; and twining her arms round his neck, pressed her rosy lips on his cheek, and smiled upon him.

Her seraphic smile thrilled to his very soul. With a ghastly expression he essayed to put her from him ; but she clung the closer, as she lisped out, looking piteously in his face, “ Do you not love the little Rebecca ? ” still fondling Sir Ambrose.

There is something in the innocent expression and smiles of childhood, which, at the moment, cannot be resisted, even in the coldest and most hardened bosom.

Rebecca had so insensibly won upon Sir Ambrose’s affections, and gained such

a surprising ascendancy over him, though he might be said to hate all mankind, the fancy he had taken to this child was to himself unaccountable, nor could he reconcile it with his misanthropic habits. But the heart, however abstracted from the world, pines for something whereon to rest its affections. Sir Ambrose Templeton was an isolated being. He had taken a disgust to mankind. The object of his choice and affection abandoned him, and gave her hand to another.

Hence, he drew such an unfavourable opinion of women, in the hour of anguish and disappointment, he made a rash and solemn vow of everlasting celibacy, forswore society, turned all his thoughts to the science of astrology, and became the abstracted, isolated being described.

In case of no heir to his estate, his fortune went to an only surviving brother, who resided on his property in Lancaster.

After Sir Ambrose had drawn Rebec-

ca's horoscope, he became the most wretched of men. He had presumptuously endeavoured to scan the ordinations of Providence. The view he had taken into that futurity had unfolded an event he was bound to avert, however fatal to his peace, however destructive to the innocent Rebecca, of whom he must dispose. Did he return her to her parents, the event portended still would happen, and only her death could disannul it. To remove her from a scene of trouble, was but translating her to a happier world, if such a world existed; but of that he entertained a doubt. Hence, the sceptic is led to deeds of sin, fearless of that hereafter, so rich in promise and reward to those who trust in God.

Evading as much as possible Rebecca's caresses, Sir Ambrose led her from his observatory, and consigned her to the care of Mistress Watkins. Meanwhile, he

vainly endeavoured to collect firmness to execute the fatal purpose he resolved upon, that of committing the poor child to a watery grave.

While she slept profoundly, in a small bed placed beside his own, he softly took her in his arms, and wrapping his cloak around her, bore her before dawn of day from the castle, to the bank of the river Ouse, which, flowing into a remote creek, united its tributary stream with the Humber. The tide, Sir Ambrose thought, was flowing in ; but he mistook, for it was rapidly receding; and, having laid Rebecca on the verge of a sloping bank, convinced that the undulating waves would shortly cradle her for ever in its watery bed, he waited not to see the tide approach, but flying with the swiftness of the assassin, he looked not behind him.

A merciful Providence overruled his wicked purpose.

Sir Ambrose first thought of making

Valerno, his Italian servant, the confident of his wicked purpose, and consigning poor Rebecca into his hands ; but fearful that he would betray him, he at length resolved to accomplish the deed of horror himself.

Sir Ambrose informed Mistress Watkins, the child Rebecca having presumed to break into his forbidden privacy, and of late perpetually disturbed him, he was determined to part with her ; and in the morning he should take her before him on horseback, to one of his tenants' wives, who would instruct and take care of her, for she quite distracted his mind.

Mistress Watkins fain would have pleaded for the little Rebecca to remain at the castle, for she had become extremely fond of the child ; but she knew Sir Ambrose to be a resolute man, and that his word was a law ; so she dared not interpose.

Having invented this feasible story, and formed the desperate resolution of

destroying the innocent little creature, she was placed, with heart full of glee, winning smiles, and prattling questions, on his steed before him.

On the borders of the Ouse were scattered a few fishermen's huts. Michael Barton was sitting before his door mending his nets, when he saw something floating on the surface of the water ; curiosity induced him to go to the river side, and on beholding what it was, instantly plunged into the stream, and catching hold of the drowning Rebecca, brought her in his arms to his humble dwelling ; exclaiming, as he piteously regarded her, " Poor child ! methinks you would soon have had a watery grave. I was but just in time to save thee."

Margery Barton, who saw her husband advancing towards home, bearing something in his arms, ran to meet him ; and lifting up her hands in surprise, inquired eagerly, " whose poor child he had got, in so sad a plight."

" You see, Margery," he replied,

"Providence has sent us one in this poor little creature. I had enough to do to save her; only just in time; in another minute she would have been gunnedrowned. I wonder who owns the child: it is a pretty little creature," ~~ing~~ ^{pressing} her to his good-natured breast; "~~and~~ poor thing, must have fallen into the river, or, mayhap, ran away from its nurse; for she has such fine clothes on she cannot belong to a poor body."

"Take her, Margery," he continued. "undress and put her to bed; for I see there yet is life in her; and let her have one of your nice hot possets, which will soon set her to rights, if you will ~~use~~ ^{use} yourself."

Margery tenderly took the ~~invention~~ ^{infant} Rebecca from her husband. "God bless her pretty innocent face," she said; "we will take care of you if you are not owned."

"I was sure," replied Michael. "you would not mind taking the

of the young thing ; for as we have no children of our own, it will be but an amusement to bring her up, though we can do no great things for her ; but she shall not want food and raiment, God bless the dear child ; and depend on it, Margery, we shall never be the poorer."

Margery hurried away with Rebecca, who still remained in a state of stupor. She placed her in a warm bed, and having poured some comfortable liquid down her throat, she gave signs of animation, which was observed with joy by the poor fisherman and his wife, who tenderly watched over her.

When Rebecca awoke from the heavy sleep into which she had fallen, she fixed her eyes with surprise on Margery and Michael, and enquired for her papa.

They did all in their power to sooth her ; but, like all ignorant people, deluded her with false promises, at the same time vainly endeavouring to find

out whence she came, and to whom she belonged.

She told them all she recollected, from which they gathered little or no information — for she only remembered being placed on horseback before papa, and afterwards was unconscious of what had befallen her. She said, “ She was always called Rebecca, and knew no other name. She was also ignorant of that of her papa, as she always called Sir Ambrose, who had so taught her.”

After crying for two or three days, sensible of the loss of her friends, and change of condition, she gradually became endeared to Margery and the fisherman, but her greatest favourite was a good-natured house-dog, who suffered Rebecca to play with him, and was very fond of her. Finding papa neither came nor sent for her, Sir Ambrose was soon forgotten—for infantile impressions are like passing shadows, which suddenly disappear.

Sir Ambrose Templeton, meantime, returned, with a feeling of cowardice and horror the most agonizing, starting at even the whispering wind, and pursued by the infant cries of Rebecca, fancying her perpetually flitting before his eyes; sleep fled his pillow, and the perturbation of his mind at last brought on a brain-fever, which raged with such violence for some days, his life was despaired of: when he did recover, it was long before his mind regained composure; and, at times, such was the wildness of his looks and manner, all his domestics were terrified, when obliged to come into his presence.

Rebecca's disconsolate parents made several vain efforts to recover their darling child. Farmer Russell was even bold enough to force himself into the knight's presence, and peremptorily demanded his child; but her name awakened him to madness, and his replies became so furious and incoherent, in despair farmer

Russell was obliged to give up the point, convinced that the knight was out of his senses, and knew not what he said.

Mrs. Watkins, the housekeeper, was ignorant what had become of Rebecca. She told dame Russell all she knew on the mysterious subject : that Sir Ambrose had taken her, she knew not whither, and said it was to place her at a distance with one of his tenants' wives, having of late become so troublesome, she disturbed him. Mistress Watkins so far consoled the worthy couple, as to enlarge on the knight's fondness for Rebecca, and how much he indulged her.

CHAP. IV.

THE ten succeeding years of Rebecca's life were spent in the fisherman's hut. Honest Michael fulfilled his duty towards her, in bestowing on her every homely comfort and advantage, as far as his lowly station admitted, giving her what little learning his scanty means allowed. The quickness of Rebecca's capacity made her acquire more knowledge than the rest of her companions at the small day-school in the village. In household concerns she was remarkably alert, and proved very useful to her foster-mother, who was in a declining state of health. She was grateful for the kindness they showed her, for she had learned the painful truth, that to their bounty and humanity she was indebted for shelter and subsistence; and, from their fostering

care, she thought it impossible she could ever do enough to contribute to their ease and benefit.

Rebecca was now in her fourteenth year, well grown, lovely, and engaging. Her fair complexion, mild blue eyes, with a profusion of light curling hair, rendered her a most attractive creature. There was a pensive melancholy in her air, which, for so young a person, threw an interest into her appearance, that excited amongst the neighbouring gentry a curiosity to know who she was ; for her neat round-eared cap, and homely garments, could not conceal an inborn gentility, and timid softness of manner, so prepossessing and engaging. There was something extremely picturesque in Rebecca's appearance ; her silken blond ringlets flowing unconfined from beneath the cap, which only partially confined them, with a low-crowned hat and ribbons. Her bare arms, though sun-burnt, were finely formed, and the snow-white sleeve of her

chemise, stiff stays, and coloured handkerchief, modestly tucked within to shade her fair bosom, short striped wolsey petticoat, displaying the prettiest foot and ankle, might have characterised her as some Arcadian shepherdess, rather than a lowly cottage maid. She was an excellent spinner, and got employment from the families around, who were so pleased with her modest and guileless manner, they were in the habit often of sending for her into their halls, to talk to her, and make her presents ; and, for the last four years of her life, she had been able to support herself, and contribute by her industry to the comforts of her foster parents, who were becoming aged and infirm.

Rebecca's pensive turn of mind inclined her rather to find amusement in studious pursuits, than the usual pastimes in which children delight, and all her little spare money was laid out in story

books and ancient ballads, such as the Babes in the Wood, Chevy Chase, &c.

When she attained sufficient age to possess reflection, often seating herself on the banks of the river, she dwelt with painful wonder on the extraordinary circumstance of having been rescued from a watery grave, owing to the humanity of the poor fisherman. She had no recollection of her perilous situation, or what accident had caused it. Vain, too, was all conjecture to whom she belonged. Michael was ignorant of the surname she bore, nor did she remember ever being called any thing save Rebecca. She retained, however, a sort of vague idea that her home had not always been near the spot where she now dwelt. Of her parents she had not the slightest recollection; yet her fancy pictured some person, who had fondled her with affection, and cherished her with every indulgence, she had called papa; living in a great house, with a large park (such she con-

jectured), in which she was allowed to run at freedom. Of Mrs. Watkins she also had a vague idea; for she had lavished on her an abundance of *bon bons*, and been very kind to her. But, when lost in the imaginations which bewildered her, she then supposed these fancies were the chimeras of her own brain; for surely, had such a person actually existed as her fancy drew, in the years that had passed, he would have made some enquiry after a young creature, who had disappeared and was lost, nor have left her to the mercy of strangers, supposing she was not dead.

Rebecca had no clue to trace a single circumstance connected with her infancy, except an amulet she wore, containing mystical figures, suspended from a small but costly gold chain round her neck, fastened with a ring of gold, having the letters *A. T.* and *R. R.* upon it.

This amulet had been put on by Sir Ambrose Templeton, soon after her arrival at Gloomore castle; but what might

be the influence of the charm upon her she was unable to conjecture. Rebecca, however, not only carefully preserved it, but continued to wear it, hoping that some day it might lead to a discovery to whom she belonged.

CHAP. V.

MICHAEL Barton was a contented, domestic man. When the occupations of the day were over he always spent his evenings at home. He never was so happy as when he was snugly seated on the settle by his fireside, beside Margery and Rebecca, who having a sweet tune-ful voice, often pleased him with singing some lively air, or reading some ancient ballad, as he smoked his pipe, and took his jug of ale, after the occupations of the day were ended.

One afternoon, however, he was asked to accompany a friend to a small inn in the neighbourhood, where there was to be a meeting of some of the country men, to one of whom farmer Brown
 mant; a witness being required
 business that was to be transacted

between them; Michael Barton, always willing to do an obliging turn, readily consented to accompany his friend.

He staid much later than he promised his wife, who, growing uneasy at the evening fast was closing in, desired Rebecca to step to the bridge-foot, and enquire for Michael. In all ~~the~~ haste, added Margery, the master has been pressed to take more ale than he is used to drink; and being always a sober man, I am afraid the liquor has overpowered him. "That's a good wench, now and see what may detain him."

Rebecca staid not to put on her hat, but ran near a mile with the speed of a sylph, to the Red Lion, at the foot of the bridge.

She heard the voice of talking and merriment as she stood at the door. Rebecca was a timid girl, and felt at a loss how to enquire for Michael. The entry was full of men, passing to and fro. At length she saw a young woman

go along the passage, and making towards her, humbly requested she would tell Michael Barton, the fisherman, there was a person in the entry that wanted to speak to him.

The damsel informed Rebecca, he was engaged with some of the gentry, and would not like to be disturbed. However, on Rebecca diffidently, but earnestly pressing her to take the message, the young woman did with reluctance.

After staying some time, while Rebecca stood trembling in the passage, she returned and said, " Master Barton desired the person to speak to him at the parlour-door." Rebecca accordingly was shown thither.

Scarcely had she put her head within the door, where several men were seated round a table, others standing in the room, when blushing scarlet, she suddenly was retreating, when a gentleman, who was just going to shut the door, on catching a momentary

glimpse at the beautiful young maiden, starting back, gazed on her with a look of inquisitive wonder, and in a voice of authority ordered her to come in.

Rebecca, abashed and frightened, turning red and pale alternately, timidly was retreating, while her fair hair, disordered by the wind, fell in a profusion of curls over that face and neck whose beauty it could not veil.

“What brings you here, little damsel?” said the gentleman, fixing, with a piercing look, his eagle eyes upon her; “whom do you want?”

“Father,” she confusedly stammered; “mother is quite uneasy at his staying so late, and sent me to see him home.”

“What is your father called?”

“Michael Barton, the fisherman, please your honour; cannot I speak with him?” she added, colouring with timidity, and eagerly casting her eyes round in search of him.

Michael now rose from the table at

which he was seated with two or three other men, who had a number of papers before them ; while the gentleman who first had spoken to Rebecca continued to gaze on her with an ardency the most distressing ; his large black eyes darted like lightning upon her, with a searching enquiry, as if they would penetrate into her very soul. His air was noble and commanding, but had a stern wildness so fearful to the young Rebecca, she softly crept round to where Michael stood, and, taking hold of his arm, said earnestly, " Pray, dear father, do come home."

When she spoke, the stranger again gave a sudden start and exclamation, passed his hand over his forehead, and earnestly looking at her, said, " What is your name, young damsel ?" " Rebecca."

" Rebecca !" he repeated, with a shrill

! starting away from the spot
! stood, rushed out of the room

There was something about the stranger indefinable to Rebecca ; who, notwithstanding his unaccountable behaviour, and wild ferocity, seemed to associate with some vague recollection and idea connected with her infantine years. But she could not trace in her youthful memory what they were ; and wondering and dismayed at the extraordinary appearance and gestures of the stranger gentleman, she stood panic-struck when Sir Ambrose Templeton left the room.

What is the name of that mad looking person ? enquired Michael, whose eyes followed him till he was gone. “ It is Sir Ambrose Templeton,” replied farmer Brown, while all the men stood, like Rebecca, dismayed at his sudden departure ; when one of them exclaimed, with a sneering laugh, “ Sir Ambrose seems to be seized with one of his crazy fits ; did not you observe how his eyes flashed like fire, as he made but one step between the

table and the door?" Michael had never heard of such a person as the knight, till the evening before his friend, farmer Brown, was to transact business with him, and he had taken no further observation of him, except as a stern and portly looking gentleman, of whom all his neighbours seemed to be afraid; he knew not what to make of his sudden start of frenzy, but that the innocent Rebecca seemed, in some unaccountable way, to have been the occasion.

While these remarks were passing, the bar-maid came into the parlour, and going up to Michael Barton told him, "His honour, Sir Ambrose Templeton, desired to speak to him immediately in another room.

Michael was astounded, and turning pale with the apprehension of encountering a mad man, exclaimed, "What can his honour want with me? I never saw him before in my born days; I don't like to put myself in his honour's way, with his daft behaviour."

The poor fisherman, while debating whether or not to go, was again summoned, and very reluctantly obeyed, whilst Rebecca, clinging to him, would hardly suffer him to depart; "Ofather," she cried with vehemence, "the gentleman looked so terrible, I am quite frightened at him, and perhaps he intends us some harm."

"I must not refuse his honour," replied Michael, as he slowly left the parlour, and resigning Rebecca to the care of master Brown, followed the bar-maid into the best apartment of the little inn, which Sir Ambrose was pacing up and down with hurried steps.

The fisherman bowed respectfully, and enquired his honour's pleasure.

"Is the young maiden," said the baronet, "who is called Rebecca, your daughter?" fixing his scrutinizing eyes upon him.

Michael looked confused, and at length stammered out, "Yes, your honour, Rebecca is our daughter."

Sir Ambrose steadily regarded him

while he replied, and then exclaimed, "By adoption you mean, not by birth; you are not her natural parent."

"She be natural to Margery and me," he interrupted, warmly; "we have brought Rebecca up, your honour, I may say, from almost a baby, for, poor innocent, she was too young to tell her own name, only Rebecca, and I could never discover to whom she belonged; I found her one morning floating on the Ouse river, as I was sitting at my door mending my tackle. We have given her all the learning we could afford, and she has come on with her book surprisingly. Rebecca is a very sweet girl."

"Then you have no knowledge to whom she belongs?"

"Never could find out, sir; it has often and often been a matter of wonder to wife and myself how the poor infant came to fall into the river, and no person belonging to her near at hand; but that was not so wonderful, as that never a word of

enquiry was made after her ; so it seems as if Providence placed her in our hands, as we have no children of our own, and God, I am sure, has rewarded our humble endeavours, Rebecca is so great a comfort and blessing to our old age."

Sir Ambrose did not interrupt the fisherman with any comment during his detail, though the various feelings which agitated him, as he proceeded in his narration, would have been remarked by an observing eye, so perpetually did his varying countenance express the tumult which was passing within.

To find Rebecca alive, in blooming beauty, with the full glow of health and happiness in her face, was an event so surprising, so appalling, he was ready to sink with the momentary feeling of remorse and shame.

The dread of discovery was happily removed by the fisherman's simple and undisguised narrative. If still a latent spark of virtue remained in Sir Ambrose's

bosom, it was now awakened by the generous humanity of Michael Barton.

It was, however, important that he should resign Rebecca; perhaps with her increased years the aspect of the planets might be changed; again they should be examined, and on their appearance should rest her future fate. The prediction concerning himself he was still resolved to avert, even if Rebecca again became the sacrifice.

He proposed giving Michael Barton a new boat, fishing tackle, and a purse of money, on condition he would part with Rebecca cheerfully; if not, other means must be effected to obtain her.

The infantine beauty, which so unaccountably had won upon the knight, he now beheld matured into a loveliness the most captivating. Rebecca's guileless simplicity, her soft persuasive voice, when she spoke so affectionately to Michael, went to his very soul, and Sir Ambrose would have subdued those bad

passions which instigated him to evil, had he been guided by the dread of an hereafter, and that proper sense of a Divine Providence which disposes of his creatures. But Sir Ambrose unhappily had given himself up to that dark power by whose dominion he acted, and therefore was preparing to plunge deeper and deeper into actions of the most horrible nature.

Once more the planets were consulted, the mystical figures curiously arranged according to Rebecca's present age, which he thought might throw some new light on the prospects of her future fate. Fair and prosperous was her destiny; riches and honour poured in upon her with the most liberal hand, but still, as before, their destinies were united; and the aspect of the horoscope portended, as formerly on casting his own, that the most important event of his life could not be separated from that of Rebecca's. Sir Ambrose, in a fit of rage, broke all

his machinery, and throwing the mystical figures into the fire, vowed that he would bid defiance to such mistaken predictions, and Rebecca should again be sacrificed, rather than the prediction should be accomplished.

CHAP. VI.

SIR Ambrose rode over to Ouse bridge, and was directed by the landlord of the small inn to the hut where dwelt the honest fisherman and his wife.

It was evening when he reached the door. His attention, for some minutes, was arrested by the sound of a melodious voice, singing, in a soft plaintive strain, the ballad of "Black-eyed Susan." There was a tenderness in the air quite affecting, from the simple pathos with which it was sung, that must have subdued a heart less hardened than Sir Ambrose possessed. He would not tap at the door, but abruptly lifting the latch, entered the lowly dwelling. He beheld a true picture of happiness in humble life. A cheerful wood fire blazed on the hearth, shedding a partial light over the kitchen ; in a corner was seated, side by side, on a

high-backed oak-settle, Michael and his wife — he smoking his pipe, and Margery, who was almost blind, knitting a stocking, while the beautiful Rebecca, who appeared to be busily preparing some simple repast for supper, every now and then warbled a verse of the ballad, while the faithful dog, stretched at full length, lay basking in the enjoyment of the fire.

Sir Ambrose stood for a few minutes contemplating this happy group, when the stranger's step caught the ear of the watchful Rover, who, springing up, began to bark, and was making towards him, when he was prevented by an injunction to lie down, upon which he crouched at the feet of his master.

Rebecca, on observing the stranger, fled to the chimney-corner, and hid herself at the back of the settle. Madge gazed with vacant wonder at the appearance of a person so noble, and Michael, rising from his seat, made a respectful bow, and enquired humbly his honour's pleasure.

“ If I mistake not,” said Sir Ambrose, “ this is Michael Barton’s dwelling, and you are he? I promised, my good fellow,” continued the knight, “ to see you again, that I might do something to render your circumstances more comfortable. I now come to fulfil my promise, by relieving your penurious situation.”

“ I humbly thank your honour,” replied Michael ; “ but I am content with the little heaven has given us. I don’t desire more than I am able to earn, only for the sake of Rebecca, God bless her; but she is young, and willing to work ; and, when we are dead, I am not afraid she will want ; for I am certain some person will take care of her, as we have done before them.”

This was a fortunate opening for Sir Ambrose ; he eagerly embraced it. “ No doubt, my honest man,” he said ; “ Rebecca will find a friend. Indeed she has already ; I am willing to take her at once off your hands, and provide for her. She

appears to be a clever handy damsel. My housekeeper will be glad of such a young person to assist in her domestic arrangements."

"Part with Rebecca, your honour!" interrupted Michael, hastily and alarmed.

"Margery and I would as soon part with our life. She is every thing to us — the comfort, the blessing of our old age. Your honour, I humbly hope, will not be offended; but I am a plain spoken, though a poor man, and mean no disrespect towards you, Sir; but as to parting with the child, it would break our hearts. I am sure Rebecca would sooner share our bit of bread than leave us."

"Ask her the question," cried the knight.

"Rebecca, darling," said the poor fisherman, "this rich gentleman has generously offered to take you home to his grand house, and put you in the way, under his housekeeper, of getting your livelihood, if you will go with him."

Rebecca turned deadly pale. She trembled, and bursting into a flood of tears, she clung to Madge, exclaiming in an agony, "Pray, pray, good father, do not part with poor Rebecca. I had rather die than leave you and mother."

Sir Ambrose impatiently interrupted her. "You are ignorant, child, of the good fortune intended for you; you are a poor simple girl, or surely you would not be a burthen on this worthy couple, who so long have taken care of you, and administered to your wants."

"I don't think," cried Rebecca modestly, as the tears streamed down her cheeks, "respected Sir, father and mother consider me a burthen, humbly asking your pardon: but I am sure, if I can do any thing for their support, who have always been so good and tender to me, I will cheerfully, for it is my duty and pleasure. I shall be quite unhappy to leave them."

"You shan't go, my dear child," ex-

claimed Margery, weeping and folding Rebecca in her arms. "Surely, Michael Barton, you are not so hard-hearted to put Rebecca away for the sake of filthy lucre? Have you not enough to satisfy all our wants, and has not God greatly blessed us, in giving us this dear child to comfort our old age, and help us?"

"Well, well, honest man," said Sir Ambrose, in a tone of chagrin and disappointment, frowning terribly upon him, "if you will not part with the girl, at least give her a holiday, and let her come for a day to Gloomore castle. I will send a trusty person to shew her the way. I am not used to refusals and contradictions."

"Certainly, if your honour desires it, we will spare her for a day, just not to seem ungrateful for your favours, Sir. I will bring her myself to the castle."

"Be it so then," he answered sternly. "Thursday next, that is four days hence, I shall depend on your bringing the pretty maiden to the castle."

Michael Barton had acceded, it was true, to Sir Ambrose's request ; but it was only because he was afraid to refuse, there was something so commanding and peremptory about the knight, he was awe-struck with the stern dignity of his manner.

It was a sore struggle to part with Rebecca, even for a single day ; more particularly when he saw her so full of grief, for she did nothing but weep, and, by the most engaging caresses and persuasion, endeavoured to prevail on Michael not to take her to the castle ; for she seemed to have a fearful presentiment, if she was once there, that she should never more return to her humble happy home. Michael, however, had given his word, and was not to be dissuaded from his promise.

CHAP. VII.

SIR Ambrose had given Michael Barton a new fishing-boat and tackle. Eager to embark in it, and try his luck, he set sail in high spirits. He tenderly saluted his wife and Rebecca, desiring them to keep up a good heart, assuring the latter that he would never part with her for more than a day or so, as long as he lived.

The morning was fair and promising, but the wind was high ; and, ere Michael had been gone many hours, a sudden squall arose, and the tempest raged with violence.

Margery became quite uneasy. Rebecca had enough to do to quiet her fears, and subdue her own. The wind was against him, and the harbour dangerous for landing. Michael was an experienced seaman, and Margery trusted he would not be too venturesome. The

day passed miserably: night came on, and, with every blast, their fears increased to agony. In the morning the wind subsided, but still no tidings of poor Michael, though his boat had been seen tossing off shore.

Margery, feeble and old, could not creep even as far as the beach, when the sad spectacle met her eye, of the dead body of poor Michael, borne on a plank by some of the neighbouring fishermen towards his hut. Rebecca first glanced on the melancholy scene, and having uttered a piercing cry, sunk insensible on the ground. Long she remained in that state; though immediately assisted by one of the crowd assembled, and was carried after the body of Michael to the house of mourning.

Madge had crawled to the door of her hut, and stood leaning on her stick, with wistful eyes, when the body of her husband, and the lifeless Rebecca, was lifted within by the sorrowful group of

neighbours who compassionately had assisted in bringing his remains home.

Old, feeble, paralysed, the sudden shock was too much for the weak, exhausted frame of poor Margery. She sunk back on her chair, and, before the morning's dawn, her lifeless remains were placed by the side of those of her long faithful and affectionate husband; and she was spared the anguish which overwhelmed the now forlorn Rebecca.

Sir Ambrose Templeton believed he had so far accomplished his purpose, by getting Rebecca once more in his power, as to defeat the fate predicted. It was easy to delude the simple fisherman; and he thought a liberal bribe would induce a person he considered in his power, to enter into his plan of removing Rebecca to a distant country, where she would never be seen nor heard of more.

Anxiously did Sir Ambrose wait for the arrival of Michael with the damsel. The day, the hour passed away that had

been appointed, and yet she came not. In vain the baronet had paced the avenue leading to the castle, till weary, and losing all patience, he became furious with disappointment, and rode off to the fisherman's hut, resolved not to depart without Rebecca.

When Sir Ambrose reached the door, he paused a few seconds, for he saw no ray of light reflected from the lattice-window, nor heard a voice within : all was still and mute as the dead within. He softly raised the latch. All was darkness and desolation. No cheerful fire blazed on the hearth. The settle, where, a few days ago, sate so happily the humble couple, now was vacant. No watchful dog barked at his entrance—no sweet, tuneful voice met his ear—all was hushed and quiet. He listened, dismayed and staggered, when he heard the sound of a low sobbing, as if from grief, which issued from the only chamber in the dwelling.

The door stood a-jar : Sir Ambrose

looked within. He beheld, stretched on the lowly bed, the lifeless forms of honest Michael and his wife. On her knees, at the bed-side, rested Rebecca, with folded and uplifted hands. Her lovely dishevelled tresses partially shaded her pale face, and with eyes elevated to heaven, but swollen with weeping. At the foot of the bed lay the faithful dog, in sorrowful dumbness. Over the bodies, Rebecca had strewn some sprigs of rosemary, which, with other flowers, perfumed the little chamber.

The appearance of death is ever awful. But to a troubled conscience, it wears an aspect the most appalling. Sir Ambrose was so taken by surprise at the mournful scene he now beheld, that, wholly unprepared for such a one, he rushed out of the dwelling, unable to speak, returning with rapidity to Gloomore castle.

Rebecca, absorbed in grief, was unconscious of what had passed; and was so lost to even a sense of her own

calamitous situation, she had not bestowed a thought on what was to become of her in future. She felt that she was for ever deprived of her only friends and protectors, and she mourned for them as if she had really been their daughter.

Persons in an humble station of life, are more friendly to each other in the season of affliction, than those of higher condition. Prosperity renders the heart callous towards our fellow-creatures; whilst adversity, when attended by poverty, receives that sympathy which is active, in friendly exertions, from some benevolent neighbour in equally humble life, who flies not from the house of mourning, but seeks to administer comfort in the time of need.

Several of the neighbours visited Rebecca in her affliction; for Michael Barton was well respected and esteemed in his humble calling. He had been an honest, industrious man. He owed no person any thing. He was frugal and saving,

without being penurious. Rebecca knew he was possessed of a little money, at least to bury him and his wife decently. One of the neighbours kindly offered to undertake the mournful office for her, which she gratefully accepted.

Preparations were making for the funeral, when a stranger entered the dwelling; addressing a plain, respectable-looking, elderly woman, who was bearing Rebecca company, he said he came from Sir Ambrose Templeton, of Gloomore castle, with an order, not only to defray every necessary expence for the funeral of the poor fisherman and his wife, but he was desired also to bring their daughter back to the castle. The woman to whom the stranger addressed himself, said she would step out and call her husband, for she was ignorant of all these matters, and he must consult the master.

John Martin was master of a pilot-boat, a good-hearted, respectable person, and had, with his wife, taken a very humane

part towards the now friendless Rebecca. He was quite pleased at the information communicated by the stranger respecting Rebecca, who had requested to see the maiden.

When she was told by Martin of her good fortune, he was surprised and dismayed, when, instead of hearing the intelligence with delight, she cried aloud, earnestly supplicating that she might be suffered to stay by the remains of her parents, and attend them to the grave.

"It is very strange," exclaimed Rebecca, piteously, "what makes this Sir Ambrose Templeton so anxious to provide for me, and his desire to take me away from my poor, dear departed father and mother. I am sure it was an evil hour that first brought him here to interrupt our happiness, and give the boat to poor Michael Barton, who might have been alive now, if he had not been so venturesome." Martin tried to coax and sooth Rebecca.

"Somehow, Master Martin," she continued, "I am quite afraid of this Sir Ambrose Templeton. He has such a frowning, horrid look, he sets me all in a tremble. I doubt he intends no good towards me; and his eyes are so piercing, when he speaks, as if they flashed fire. His Honour may mean kindly; but I wish we had never seen him."

"You will affront Sir Ambrose," replied Master Martin, "if you do not go with the gentleman he has sent for you."

"I should be sorry to offend his Honour," she answered timidly; "but till father and mother are buried, I will never leave the house. It is my duty, Master Martin, to follow them to the grave — a poor respect I owe their memory, for their great, great tenderness to me. Oh! Master Martin, they loved me as if I had been born their child. Blessed and respected be their memory."

Rebecca, quite overcome with the

recollected kindness of her humble benefactors, burst into a flood of tears.

All persuasion was unavailing to bear her from the spot. At length, however, somewhat subdued by the generosity of the stranger, in defraying what was required for the funeral expences and decent mourning, she yielded a reluctant consent to go to Gloomore castle for a day the next time he came; remembering her foster-father had given a promise to that effect, which she now held as sacred.

Rebecca, as chief mourner, of which her tears and lamentations bore true testimony, followed to the grave the poor fisherman and his wife, attended by all the inhabitants of the hamlet in which they had dwelt, esteemed as they were regretted in their humble calling.

CHAP. VIII.

VALERNO, Sir Ambrose's Italian valet, who had undertaken to finally dispose of Rebecca, by placing her in a convent for life, (for the baronet's heart misgave him at a second attempt to destroy the innocent Rebecca,) was empowered to convey her as secretly as possible out of the kingdom; and it was settled, he should proceed with her to Liverpool, where they were to embark for Italy, and conduct her to the convent Valerno named, situated in the midst of the Appenines.

Valerno was not at heart a villain, but mean and avaricious; inordinate love of money had induced him to consent to dispose of Rebecca in the way stated. The large bribe offered by the baronet, he had not resolution to withstand; and Sir Ambrose believing she now would

inevitably be placed beyond the reach or possibility of the fate predicted, consented to a plan which not merely eased his conscience, but set his mind at rest. Nor could he altogether forget her innocent infantine prattle, her engaging ways, which so often had beguiled him of many miserable, solitary hours.

Rebecca, though unconscious that she was departing for more than a single day, notwithstanding took a sorrowful farewell of that humble home, now so desolate, where her childhood had so happily been spent. She felt herself a solitary being on the face of the earth, none to love and cherish her, nor possessed of one person that she had any natural claims upon, either for affection or support. She wept bitterly when she thought of her desolateness, but yet she felt inward support, knowing the orphan and the friendless are ever the peculiar care of Providence.

She fain would have taken Michael's

faithful dog along with her, for his caresses and whines were quite distressing ; but Master Martin and his wife promised to take good care of Rover, and to give her also shelter on her return from Gloomore castle, till she could find some desirable situation for her support.

When Rebecca more closely observed Valerno, who came to conduct her to Sir Ambrose Templeton's, she was struck with the bad expression of his countenance, and involuntarily shrunk from the peculiar cast of his small grey subtle eyes, as they looked unmoved upon her. His complexion was wan and sallow; his figure tall and lank ; and though his voice was low and gentle, his language was almost unintelligible, from the broken English which he spoke, which was so interlarded with compliment and courtesy, that Rebecca, used only to plain English bluntness, was quite distressed and frightened at a style of address so uncommon, and

took both alarm and disgust at his high flown flattery.

Rebecca, as they proceeded on their way, chid herself severely for the dislike and prejudice she had formed against a person to whom she was a perfect stranger, yet she could not conquer that prejudice, nor the fear and suspicion she began to entertain of some evil design against her, as the day advanced, and she understood they had still a farther way ere they came to the end of their journey.

Yet why, she mentally exclaimed, vainly striving against her weakness, should I be afraid of this man? I have done no wrong to any human being; I have always endeavoured to fulfil my duty to my departed benefactors. Am I not questioning the protection of a superior power by my idle fears?

Having thus argued, she tried to conciliate herself with Valerno, but she could not do it. The very courtesy of his manners created suspicion and alarm, and she

would rather he had been morose, for she did not know what construction to put on the extreme complacency of his manners.

They stopt for an hour at a small lonely inn, about the middle of the day, to rest their horses, and take refreshment.

It was then that Rebecca first ventured to enquire how much farther they had to travel, for she had intended to return home the next day?

“ We have yet a long journey to go,” returned Valerno with indifference, “ but don’t be afraid, dear Missy, I will, on my honour, take very much care of you; you are quite safe under my protection.” “ Sir Ambrose Templeton lives a great way from ——. I wish I had not given my consent to leave home, for I cannot perceive what good is to result to me from my visit.”

“ My master is much your friend, and he is a noble, generous gentleman.” He was proceeding with a number of com-

pliments, which Rebecca put a stop to, by such a dignified and resolute air, that Valerno was daunted, and silently hung down his head.

Rebecca now determined to remain wholly silent, and endeavour to divert her painful suspicions by gazing on the passing objects.

She was just at that age to enjoy the novelty of the new scenes presented to her eye, having never gone two miles beyond the city of York, which was not very distant from the hamlet in which she lived. She tasted a momentary delight in surveying the rich pastoral landscapes, diversified by rich woodlands skirting the green meadows, filled with sheep and cattle, fat and sleek, bespeaking the fertility and thriving state of the country. The well built substantial farms, the peace, the plenty that seemed to spread over the land ; she sighed heavily at the cheerful appearance of the objects around her, compared with her own de-

solate condition ; and the more she contemplated Valerno's dark visage, the more she became convinced some evil was designed her.

More than once she thought of making her escape, and throwing herself on the mercy of some of the cottagers, whose clean comfortable dwellings, with the women seated in the sunshine, spinning at the door, looked so inviting. But to elude Valerno's ever-watchful eye was next to impossible, for, at the end of their first day's journey he occupied the adjoining chamber, and secured the door of hers ; therefore, to try to get away, either on the road or at the places where they rested, she feared would not only prove useless, but render him furious towards her.

After travelling two days and nights, Rebecca, whose fears daily increased, at length ventured to ask how much farther they had to go, for it seemed a very long way to Sir Ambrose Templeton's.

Valerno carelessly replied, "they should soon arrive at the place of their destination, for there was the sea before them."

Rebecca now gave herself up as lost, and, in a transport of agony and despair, exclaimed, "Whither do you mean to take me? Sir Ambrose Templeton's mansion is not far from Ouse-bridge; we appear to be approaching some great city."

"Sir Ambrose," returned Valerno, "has other mansions. You are ignorant that he is a rich and powerful gentleman."

"I am, indeed," cried Rebecca, in a desponding tone, and weeping bitterly. "I wish, Mr. Valerno," she continued, "you may not be deceiving a poor ignorant girl; and whatever is your wicked design, I pray God to protect an unhappy friendless creature."

Valerno turned pale as ashes, while he cast his eyes with an expression on Rebecca that made her tremble.

“ I have not deceived you, Missy,” he exclaimed in a faltering accent ; “ I told you we had a far way to travel. Make your mind easy, no harm, no harm, on my honour, is intended.” Rebecca saw she had no alternative, therefore meekly resigned herself to that Providence by which she had hitherto been protected.

CHAP. IX.

THEY now reached a vast populous seaport; the town extending, with its streets, churches, public edifices, along the mouth of the river Mersey, with its mass of shipping riding in its noble harbour, and the distant mountains of Flintshire blending their blue tops in the horizon.

Rebecca beheld the extent, the bustle, the apparent commerce, in silent wonder. She felt confused, alarmed, and desolate, for, amidst all the busy faces that met her eye, she knew no one, nor was there a single individual in this amazing throng who took the smallest interest in her existence. She sighed at her feeling of estrangement, as Valerno hurried her along, keeping close beside to the quay, where he was to make enquiries for a ves-

sel, in which they could immediately embark for Italy.

Valerno had left their horses at a public-house, and was proceeding with quick steps along the quay, Rebecca holding his arm, when a gentleman addressed him by name. Valerno turned round with surprise, changed colour, and was in great consternation.

“Whither, Valerno,” said the person of noble and dignified mien, “are you going so rapidly? What may bring you to Liverpool, and who is this pretty young maiden under your care? I hope you have not quitted my brother’s service?”

Valerno again turned pale, and stammering violently from agitation, he at length said, “I will speak to you, Sir, if you will honour me with a few minutes; but not in the street.”

“Well, do so. Follow me to this tavern at a short distance, and there I will ten to what you have to say. I am

anxious to hear of my brother ; for I understand his eccentricities have increased to such a height, I should not wonder if his brain became affected, absorbed as he is in such wild chimerical studies, prying and scanning into futurity."

Rebecca, struck with the resemblance the gentleman who addressed Valerno bore to Sir Ambrose Templeton, listened to him with breathless curiosity and interest. He possessed a more mild and benignant countenance ; but he had the same noble air and expression, and a voice of such conciliating sweetness, she felt that she could have listened to him for ever, and fancied that he seemed sent by Providence as a guardian angel to shield and rescue her from harm, as he said, looking earnestly and complacently upon her, " Is Senior Valerno, my dear, your father ? " She was going to reply, but Valerno abruptly interrupted.

" She is under my protection, Sir ; "

and lowering his voice to a whisper added, " I will explain when we reach the hotel."

When they entered the tavern, and were shown into a room that looked upon the quay, Valerno made Rebecca amuse herself at the window, and the gentleman, seating himself, entered into discourse with Valerno, in an under tone of voice, which Rebecca neither heard nor attended to.

Valerno, during his journey with Rebecca, had repented more than once of the office he had undertaken ; so entirely had the innocence and sweetness of Rebecca gained upon him, his conscience severely smote him for the treacherous part he was acting towards a simple young creature, that not a moment after he accidentally encountered Mr. Frederic Templeton, on his questioning him respecting Rebecca, he resolved to open the whole of the affair to Mr. Templeton.

The worthy gentleman listened to him

with surprise and horror. He contemplated the beautiful countenance of the hapless young maiden, with an interest that awakened so much compassion for her forlorn state, that, with the natural benevolence which distinguished every action of his life, he told Valerno, that if he would leave Rebecca under his care, henceforth she should not want a friend ; for he would adopt and protect her. " To reward your honesty and candour," continued Templeton, " I will settle on you an annuity for life, provided, instead of your going back to my brother, you return to your native country, and follow some useful occupation."

A load was taken off Valerno's conscience. He eagerly accepted the proposal so generously made by Mr. Templeton, and solemnly swore that he would settle in Italy for the remainder of his life.

It was at once arranged, that Rebecca should return with him to Fairlawn hall,

which was situated twelve miles from Liverpool, on the road to Lancaster. The timid sweetness of Rebecca, the loveliness of her person, the pensive tenderness of her countenance, with her seeming wish to conciliate herself in Mr. Templeton's favour, made such an impression on him, he thought it a happy circumstance having so accidentally met Valerno; and he spared no effort to impress on the mind of the youthful Rebecca in his favour, by speaking with kindness to her. At the same time, his manners were grave and dignified.

"Mr. Valerno tells me, my dear," said Mr. Templeton, "you are called Rebecca Barton, and that Sir Ambrose Templeton desired him to place you under the protection of those who were in future to have the guardianship of you. Do you think," he continued, taking her hand, and earnestly regarding her, "you should like to consider me henceforth your protector and friend,

and to make my house your future asylum?"

"Oh, sir," cried Rebecca, colouring with pleasure and surprise, "I should be too happy if you are in earnest, that such is to be my future lot. You look, respected sir, so good, and speak so kindly, just as poor father used, I am sure I would endeavour to do all you wish and bid me."

"If you speak truth, Rebecca," he replied, "you shall go with me to Fairlawn hall. If, by your good conduct, you gain my esteem, there is no reasonable indulgence in which you shall not be gratified — no advantage in your education you shall not derive from proper instruction; but all these things must rest with yourself, as much depends on your future behaviour. Mr. Valerno shall depart, having no further occasion for his services; and I will conduct you, after transacting some business in Liverpool, to my house."

That she was so easily to be rid of a

person so disagreeable to her as Valerno, was an event so joyful, she scarcely could believe it possible. Rebecca was not afraid of him, but she secretly dreaded that he was going to destroy her ; and at times her mind had been impressed with the idea, not only from his mysterious conduct, but the extraordinary agitation and dismay pictured in his countenance, when she questioned him respecting the place of her future destination. Even now, when every thing wore so pleasing an aspect, she could not help thinking the present happy arrangement was sudden and accidental. When she pondered on the circumstance, it led to the belief that Sir Ambrose Templeton was brother to the benevolent stranger by whom she was adopted ; for a sort of vague recollection now carried her back to that infantine period when some ideal figure her imagination pictured bore a resemblance to Sir

Ambrose Templeton, which the stranger's similitude now recalled.

Mr. Templeton had some more private conversation with Valerno, who took a respectful leave of him and Rebecca, and they left him at the tavern; he proceeding in his post-chariot, along with his new and interesting charge, to Fair-lawn-hall.

CHAP. X.

FAIRLAWN-hall was an old-fashioned substantial mansion, built of grey stone, with innumerable small, sashed windows. The edifice stood beneath the shelter of the surrounding hills, which, stretching as far as Westmoreland, finally lost themselves in the haze of distance. The approach was through an avenue of venerable elms, excluding, with their leafy canopy, both light and sunshine. The avenue was terminated by large iron gates, bearing the family crest at each angle, opening upon the velvet lawn, upon which the feathery tribe of peacocks, guinea-fowls, and pheasants, were suffered to wander at large. The centre of the lawn contained a marble basin, whence issued a fountain, always playing, surrounded by heavy stone figures, meant to personify the Naiads. Broad terraces

terminated the green ; beyond were the old-fashioned dove-cote, a rookery, parterres of flowers, formal gardens, clipped hedges, and fish-ponds. Terrace above terrace led to the portico, which opened into a spacious hall. The walls were hung with trophies of the chase, for Mr. Templeton was a lover of field-sports. Each end was terminated with large mahogany doors, richly carved and gilt ; the noble, broad staircase, like polished ebony, led into a gallery equally polished, not ornamented, as usually is the case, with a long line of formal figures drest in the various fashions of their day, but adorned with an amusing variety of landscapes, grouped with horses, dogs, stags, herds of deer ; representing, sometimes, an open country, or partial woodlands, frequently diversified with the chase. The sitting-rooms were plainly furnished ; they contained no useless or expensive ornaments ; and seemed intended alone for the comfort and convenience of the family.

Mr. Templeton's housekeeper was a decayed gentlewoman, much respected in her vocation.

Mr. Templeton was a domestic man. He had been used, till within the last two years, to the enjoyment of a family circle. He now felt desolate and dispirited, for he had tasted the enjoyment of conjugal felicity. All was now a blank in his heart, which he had searched for, in vain, to fill up; for he had lost in his amiable wife, the sum and bliss of all his happiness.

It was under this feeling of desolate loneliness that the lovely Rebecca, just entered her fourteenth year, seemed to promise a new object to excite interest: and her destitution afforded the opportunity of exerting his benevolence, which was never withheld when properly called forth, and now on an occasion so laudable.

The fatherly kindness Mr. Templeton showed Rebecca gave an elasticity to

her spirits, a contented cheerfulness to her temper, such as she had never before experienced. She formerly had only known the most homely comforts, without the advantages of education to refine her taste, or expand her mind. It now improved daily, and she acquired an acquaintance with every useful branch of knowledge, which her guardian beheld with delight, though he knew little of the modes of female education.

A few days after Rebecca's adoption, Mr. Templeton took her to his sister-in-law's at Liverpool, when he acquainted Mrs. Chesterville with all the circumstances relating to the beautiful young creature whom he introduced, and what were his intentions respecting her. Rebecca's extreme loveliness, united with her gentle timid manners, soon gained her a warm friend in Mrs. Chesterville. She invited her, in the most graceful manner, to spend as much time as was agreeable for Mr. Templeton to spare

her, along with her daughters, two very engaging girls, of nearly her own age.

Mr. Templeton was gratified by Mrs. Chesterville's attention, sensible of the advantage she would derive from remaining along with her at Liverpool for a few days. It would not only divert her, for Rebecca still mourned the loss of her humble benefactors, but afford leisure for her proper equipment, and Mr. Templeton requested his sister would spare no expence in doing it handsomely, but at the same time in the plainest style. His late wife was distinguished for the simple elegance of her dress, and he determined Rebecca should imitate her as much as possible. He requested Mrs. Chesterville to allow her to share in the studies of her daughters, and have the advantage of their masters during the vacation ; for they went to an excellent boarding-school, where Mr. Templeton intended to place Rebecca.

In the society of the two young ladies.

Rebecca became quite a new creature. She knew neither care nor anxiety, and thought the world full of happiness. Indeed, she had an alluring picture of it in the excellent family in which she had become an inmate. She rose only to contentment, and was so much caressed by Mr. and Mrs. Chesterville, her heart overflowed with gratitude and affection towards her new and indulgent friends.

Mr. Templeton came over frequently to Liverpool to visit his ward, fancying that each time that he saw her he discovered some new beauty and improvement in her person and manners. He was lavish in acts of generosity and kindness, and thought nothing too good for the lovely Rebecca, who increased in his esteem by the innocence and sweetness of her demeanour. The accomplishment in which he wished her to excel was music. There was an uncommon richness in her tuneful voice ; he was fond of music, and encouraged every means

for her instruction in that science, for which she had discovered a fine natural taste.

When the period arrived that she was to go to boarding-school, Mr. Templeton could scarcely be prevailed on to part with this interesting girl ; but when he considered, that Rebecca was just at an age when the mind is so capable of taking in instruction with facility, he consented that the next two years of her life should be devoted to those accomplishments alone to be acquired by application under the tuition of able instructors.

Fond of her young companions, Juliet and Charlotte Chesterville, she was too happy in not being separated from them to feel more than a temporary regret in parting from her kind and affectionate guardian.

When Rebecca entered her eighteenth year, Mr. Templeton took her home. He introduced her to the world as the daugh-

ter of a deceased friend. She was taught to consider him as her guardian, which character he maintained with tenderness and affection.

Rebecca's heart glowed with gratitude and respect in return for all his liberal acts of kindness.

CHAP. XI.

SIR Ambrose Templeton, in the meantime, was lost in wonder and fruitless conjecture respecting the fate of Valerno and Rebecca. Certain, if he lived, he would have come back for the reward promised for his services; as years passed away, and still no tidings reached him, at length he concluded they were both lost at sea, and now believed he had finally defeated the extraordinary *prediction*.

More gloomy and abstracted than ever, he returned to his former habits, and again attempted to pry into that futurity which rendered him so discontented and miserable.

How differently were the days of his brother filled up! Rebecca had opened a new source of happiness and interest.

She cheered, she caressed, she soothed his former sorrowful heart. There was no indulgence which he denied her, none even withheld that were at variance with his own taste. Mr. Templeton was not a man of letters, nor had he a fondness for books ; consequently his library was but scanty. Yet, when Rebecca expressed and discovered a taste for some of the most eminent authors of her day, Mr. Templeton good-naturedly indulged what he called her "*odd fancy*," by fitting up a small room for her exclusive use, with a book-case, containing the works of the most approved writers, having submitted the selection to a learned divine in the neighbourhood.

" I will not," said Mr. Templeton, " balk the inclinations of my little ward for reading, as she finds so much amusement in it ; but I cannot see what business young women have with books. It is out of their calling. Housewifery is their vocation, and far better for them."

“ It is a very silly fancy of Rebecca’s, and yet I cannot find in my heart to contradict her — the little gipsy has such a winning, coaxing way of her own. I shall, however, not allow her to sit too long poring over these stupid volumes, to spoil her pretty sparkling eyes, and take the colour of the damask rose from her cheeks.”

“ I hate a man,” he continued, “ that is called a book-worm; I have had enough of such in my poor crazy brother; a fine hand he has made of it, with his huge black letter volumes, all algebra to me; living like some old magician, and frightening all the neighbourhood with his sorceries.

“ However, my good Doctor,” proceeded Mr. Templeton, complacently smiling, “ Rebecca shall have her way so far, that I have no objection to her reading Shakspeare’s plays, for in them there is some wit and sense. When I was in London I liked myself to see one

of those good old plays ; there is much humour in that overgrown, over-fed Sir John Falstaff.

“ The history of her own country, no doubt, she has at her fingers’ end. But with Homers and Virgils she is not to bother me, I had enough of them when I was a school-boy ; if she does, as sure as she is alive, in a passion, I shall be tempted at once to make a bonfire of her whole library. A bookish woman is always despised by her own sex, setting herself up as something above them. Then as to your Romances, they only put all sort of nonsense into a girl’s head, driving the little common sense God had given her entirely away.”

Dr. Arnold smiled at Mr. Templeton’s harangue, in which he could not but admit there was some truth and reason, and promised faithfully to abide by his wishes respecting Rebecca.

With grateful delight she took possession of her pretty apartment, containing an

excellent ladies' library, with the accompaniment of globes, maps, port-folios full of prints, and drawing materials. Rebecca had finished at school so many coloured drawings, that Mr. Templeton, proud of displaying her accomplishments, hung them round a small room they always occupied of an afternoon.

There was not a family portrait in the whole house, excepting one of Sir Ambrose Templeton, done by Sir Peter Lely. Most of the apartments were hung with old storied tapestry. Rebecca often gazed on the portrait of Sir Ambrose, with a sensation of deep interest and curiosity, for the picture awakened many juvenile associations of ideas, which, though obscure and confused, yet seemed in her imagination to have had existence, though how she could not exactly recall nor define.

Over the dining-room chimney-piece hung a large oil painting, which exhibited a portion of a gentleman's park, in

which stood an ancient and gloomy castle, with turrets at each angle, and portcullis. This heavy pile of building appeared to be familiar to her. Often and often she spent hours in contemplating its massive walls, till she fancied she once had been its inhabitant; for the longer she gazed on it, the more she became convinced that one particular window (which, in fact, belonged to the chamber which she had occupied) was familiar to her.

Several times she had enquired of her guardian to whom the ancient castle belonged, but Mr. Templeton always evaded the subject; and once when she coaxingly pressed it, he said, peevishly, "I perceive, Rebecca, you are, like the rest of your sex, curious; don't tease me with idle questions; what matters it to you to whom that gloomy old place belongs? The possessor is as gloomy as itself, and only fit to be shut up in it for the rest of his life."

one's days with a sober, tranquil felicity, a happy contrast to those tumultuous pleasures which thoughtless mirth and convivial excesses excite.

CHAP. XII.

REBECCA was so initiated in the forms of genteel life, she appeared to have been born in that sphere; for even during the period of her abode with the poor fisherman and his wife, she seemed to be taken out of her natural habits. There was an air of inborn dignity in her demeanour which stamped the gentlewoman. A delicacy of sentiment, a refinement of taste, that often had excited the surprise of the neighbouring ladies of condition, who used to send for her. From the advantages of her education, she had acquired a self-possession, that gave an easy gracefulness to her manners, which were now lively though modest, and her conversation was regulated by good sense and amiability.

Her beauty was the theme of the

fect ascendancy over him by her winning and attaching manners. She occupied his sole thoughts, his sole attention. He could scarcely define the nature of the interest which she had excited in his bosom; but it was of that pure character, that her reputation was so precious to him, he resolved either to part from her or make her his wife, rather than subject her or himself to those animadversions which her obscurity, beauty, and dependence, had excited in the neighbourhood, where abundance of curiosity, gossip, and ill-natured remark was prevalent.

An excellent author justly observes, "It is not enough that your designs and actions are intrinsically good, you must take care they shall appear so. If your inside be never so beautiful, you must preserve a fair outside also."

Weighing all these considerations, and that while he was affording Rebecca a desirable home, and lavishing on her

every luxury and indulgence wealth could bestow, he was at the same time exposing her spotless character to the malevolence of the world, by suffering her to remain, though in the character of his ward, beneath his roof, without any female protectress or companion; he determined to make an offer of his hand and fortune, which, if she refused, he would seek out for her another home, and rather sacrifice his own happiness, than ultimately injure so lovely and innocent a young creature; for Mr. Templeton could not shut his eyes to the fact, that several of the proud families in his immediate neighbourhood would neither visit themselves at Fairlawn-hall, nor suffer their daughters.

The lively, youthful Rebecca, whose countenance was now lighted up with the playful smiles of innocence and happiness, a novice in the world, and wrapt up in her own native integrity, knew and guessed not what was passing around

her in that neighbourhood of which she now had been a member for some months.

Virtuous, grateful, and esteeming Mr. Templeton with the respectful tenderness of a daughter, she rose only to happiness, and retired to her pillow with peace and contentment.

CHAP. XIII.

ONE evening, after Mr. Templeton returned home to a cheerful tête-à-tête dinner with Rebecca, she sung to him, in a soft, plaintive voice, the words of the following air :—

“ I envy not the proud their wealth,
Their equipage and state ;
Give me but innocence and health,
I ask not to be great.

“ I in this sweet retirement find
A joy unknown to kings ;
For sceptres, to a virtuous mind,
Seem vain and empty things.

“ Tumultuous days and restless nights,
Ambition ever knows,
A stranger to the calm delights
Of study and repose.

“ Then free from envy, care, and strife,
Keep me, ye Powers Divine ;
And pleased, when ye demand my life,
May I that life resign.”

OLD SONG.

He hung over her with looks of fondness, and, after earnestly regarding her in silence for some time, at length said, with unusual seriousness, and tenderly taking her hand, "Sweet is your song — sweet and pure as yourself the words. But tell me, and that with sincerity, if, in the little experience you hitherto have had of the world, you expect the wishes you have just now expressed to be fulfilled, and that it is possible to live exempt from *envy, care, and strife*?"

With a smile, and blush of modesty, she cheerfully replied, "Why, Sir, should I not? — I envy no person, to care I am a stranger, and, as to strife, I have neither the inclination nor the opportunity of quarrelling with any one; for you, my dear respected guardian, leave not a wish of my heart unaccomplished, not a kindness unbestowed."

Mr. Templeton's eyes glistened with pleasure. "Yet, Rebecca," he continued, more gaily, "with these confessions,

that neither envy, care, nor strife are inmates in your bosom, you have unwittingly sown the seeds of envy and dissension in many."

Rebecca started, coloured crimson, and the tears came into her eyes, as she expressively and impatiently demanded an explanation.

"You are young," returned he, "which with women verging towards old maids, is a matter of jealousy and envy. You are considered beautiful, a still more reasonable cause for dislike. Then every little juvenile gaiety causes some peccadillo in your conduct.. At this period, a siege is raising against you by all the old cats in the neighbourhood, who wish not better sport than to capperclaw you, and put your nose out of joint."

Rebecca turned pale and red alternately, and exclaimed, "I am indeed a novice in the ways of the world, if it is such as you, Sir, have described."

"Fear it not, Rebecca," proceeded

Mr. Templeton ; “ the virtuous ultimately triumph.”

“ At least, I hope,” said she, diffidently, “ my integrity will shield me from serious harm.”

“ It shall, dear Rebecca,” Mr. Templeton cried, warmly : “ now listen to me, while I speak dispassionately, and ponder on what I say.”

“ The lovely and virtuous woman,” he continued, with faltering voice, “ who now, alas ! sleeps in her grave, taught me to justly estimate your sex. Mrs. Templeton was the pattern of every female excellence — sacred and precious is her memory. I am a man of few words and plain manners ; and, at my time of life, I understand not the character of a dangling, whining lover ; a soft, simpering creature, who makes a fool of the woman with whom he intends to pass the remainder of his days ; putting into her head, in the first instance, nothing but vanity and self-approbation, by his pala-

vering, fulsome flattery ; with all his honied words, probably, before the honeymoon (as the first three months after marriage are called,) is over, he treats the fair creature with as many imprecations as he formerly did compliments ; without considering that, when a couple embark together on the ocean of life, it is ‘for better and for worse.’ Perfection is not in human nature. The grand and true system of happiness is to bear and forbear ; and in youth to make an interest with each other, that, when old age creeps on, they may each soften the infirmities of decaying nature, and with good humour mutually consent patiently to endure the waywardness of frail mortality.”

“O, dear Sir,” cried Rebecca, enthusiastically, “what a just picture have you seemingly drawn of the way to ensure happiness through life.”

“If you think so,” interrupted Mr. Templeton, “suppose you make the ex-

periment. Such are the plain, solid truths I have endeavoured to lay before you ; consider them all: I give you twenty-four hours to do so. If, at the end of that period, you will accept me as the guardian of your future life, for it is only in the character of your husband, and under that title, (so tender I am of your reputation,) I can suffer you in future to remain beneath my roof, — I will endeavour to act up to that sacred name, with as much affection towards you as a widowed heart admits.

“Be candid, be sincere,” he continued, with the utmost gravity, “your happiness and mine now rests on your truth and honour.”

With these words Mr. Templeton rose from his seat ; and quitting abruptly the room, left Rebecca so lost in surprise and contending emotions, she was powerless to move for some time.

CHAP. XIV.

REBECCA was struck with amazement at her guardian's abrupt declaration, and the offer of his hand and fortune. She was powerless to remove, and remained fixed for some time to her chair, for her senses seemed bewildered.

Her youthful heart was a stranger to the tender passion of love. She possessed strong sensibility ; but it was only directed in the channel of unbounded gratitude, and duteous affection, towards Mr. Templeton. He had opened to her new prospects ; and a rank so elevated, and a character so respectable, that in contemplating a change so extraordinary, she felt at a loss what reply to give to a person whom she never for a moment had viewed in the rank of a lover. His grave demeanour, parental authority, and precise habits stamped him rather as the

guardian, and old bachelor, than a candidate in the Temple of Hymen.

The longer Rebecca pondered on Mr. Templeton's recent proposal, less and less did her inclination waver in giving the decision in his favour. There was something so noble, generous, and disinterested in his offer, of marrying a young woman, of whose origin and connections he was ignorant, and who, except for his fatherly support, must, in all probability, have been destitute and friendless, that when she considered the motives which alone could have induced his proposals, she no longer hesitated to accede to the wish Mr. Templeton had expressed, that she should be his for ever.

Rebecca's affections were disengaged. She never yet had seen the person on whom she felt the least inclination to bestow them. Though no sentiment of what might be called love guided her acceptance of Mr. Templeton, she experienced for him such respectful tender-

ness, and warmth of gratitude, she thought that, in devoting her future life to his happiness, she could only make such a return as he was entitled to, for the deep interest he had shown in her welfare, and that unbounded liberality, so cheerfully at all times bestowed, to render her an accomplished and amiable young woman.

After a sleepless night, Rebecca rose in the morning, with the determination not to keep her guardian in suspense, when no longer undecided herself. Mr. Templeton, who impatiently awaited her appearance at the breakfast-table, when she entered the room, cast on her a look of anxious and penetrating enquiry, for Rebecca was pale and agitated.

He took her hand, rather with respectful tenderness, than with his accustomed ease and familiarity; and as he gently pressed it, he said in a hurried manner, "Have you, Rebecca, considered the conversation of last night, and have you

weighed it well?" ardently gazing upon her.

"I have, Sir," she returned in a faltering accent, as a crimson glow spread over her former colourless cheeks.

"Tell me then," he interrupted with emotion, "and tell me without hesitation, am I henceforth to consider you as the wife of my bosom, or the daughter of my adoption?"

"As your wife," she replied in a cheerful voice, "my dear, respected guardian, if, indeed, you think me worthy of being exalted to so high an honour."

"Think you deserving!" repeated Mr. Templeton warmly. "By my soul I do; and to constitute your happiness, Rebecca, shall be the study of my life. We will smile at the jeers of the meddling world; for you will be called a young fool for marrying a man old enough, it will be said, to be your father, with so much youth and beauty. But we do no injury to that world, which can neither exalt nor depress us. If content

with the lot in which fortune has cast us, spreads sunshine over our days, even let the world scorn us as it may, we will defy its malice. Curiosity, probably, will lead the idle multitude to Fairlawn-hall. Let them come — we will select society for ourselves. The good and sensible will appreciate your excellence ; and, for the rest, there are so many jack-a-dandies of men, and butterflies in the shape of women, they are only fit company for one another — we will have none of them.”

Rebecca listened with smiles of complacency to Mr. Templeton, who continued : “ I am sorry your pretty, good-humoured companion, Juliet Chesterville, is not at home to keep you company ; I will send a message without delay for her mother, and request her to bring Charlotte. It is true she is rather a mad-cap, but she is a good-natured girl in the main. The society of a female companion, I know, at present, will be agreeable ; and we shall want many little

consultations, not myself understanding any thing about women's gear."

"You are ever, dearest Sir," she returned, "considerate and kind, in thinking what may best promote the happiness of your greatly-favoured and grateful Rebecca."

Mr. Templeton sat down and penned the following letter to Mrs. Chesterville.

"MY DEAR SISTER-IN-LAW— You know what a tender affection I had for my late wife ; also how grievously I felt her loss. It may, therefore, naturally prove to you a matter of surprise, knowing how I have mourned during my widowhood, to hear, from that very cause, I am going once more to enter the matrimonial state. Perhaps too, you, like the rest of the world, may jeer when you learn that it is the pretty Rebecca I intend making my wife. The young thing wants a protector that not only will guard her from harm, but the malice of the evil tongues that roam

abroad, and too frequently have no mercy on the poor and friendless ; for which cause, together with her innocent, winning ways, she shall not want that tender guardianship which a husband alone can bestow. Rebecca freely consents to be mine. She is formed for domestic life, for she is a good, sensible young woman. Her head is not turned with vanity and self-conceit ; and, though she is rather too bookish, yet she has too much discretion to teaze me with her learning.

“ Come, then, dear Kate, and partake in the happiness of the old dotard, as some may call me. Bring the merry Charlotte along with you ; she will make a pretty bridesmaid to the bashful Rebecca.

“ I send my post-chariot for you ; therefore do not refuse returning in it to your affectionate brother-in-law,

“ FREDERICK TEMPLETON.

“ *Fairlawn-hall, May 16.*”

Mrs. Chesterville was startled when she first perused Mr. Templeton's singular epistle ; as it struck her at the moment he certainly was in his dotage, (unequal alliances were then quite uncommon,) but, on giving his letter a second reading, his intended union appeared in a more favourable view ; and she saw something so benevolent, disinterested, and liberal in his conduct, she entered with alacrity into Mr. Templeton's plans, and bid her daughter Charlotte prepare to accompany her to Fairlawn-hall without delay.

When Mrs. Chesterville alighted at the portico, Mr. Templeton was in waiting to receive her. Eagerly taking her hand, as he saluted her, he exclaimed warmly, " Thank you, my dear sister-in-law, for coming so quickly, and so cheerfully ; I thank you the more, because you have not thrown cold water on my intentions respecting the pretty Rebecca. But not a word to her at present, it will only

abash her till I have prepared her for your and Charlotte's arrival. I have left her to herself, till you give her confidence and support; aye, and you must support me likewise, sister Kate, for you know what a babbling world it is; and I would not harm the sweet innocent Rebecca, even in the world's opinion, for all the wealth I possess."

"I believe you, from my heart," Mrs. Chesterville replied, with a voice of encouragement; "command my services, Mr. Templeton; I came here purposely to do all you wish." "Well, well," he replied, "you are a worthy creature, I always thought you such; and my little mad-cap here (patting kindly Charlotte's cheek) shall not repent coming to Fairlawn-hall with her mamma; you shall have a merry time of it, my dear, and Rebecca will be so happy to see you."

Mr. Templeton now formally handed Mrs. Chesterville into the great parlour, and went himself in search of Re-

becca. "Come, my pretty Rebecca," exclaimed the delighted Mr. Templeton, taking her hand, "and let me conduct you to our kind friends below. Mrs. Chesterville and Charlotte are arrived to witness our happiness. I have told my sister-in-law the happy man you are going to make me in my old age, and she participates in my felicity."

Rebecca was covered with blushes, as she timidly cast a look of tenderness on Mr. Templeton, and suffered him to lead her to their friends.

She trembled and was confused when presented to Mrs. Chesterville; but her countenance was illuminated with pleasure when her guardian said, "Sister Kate, you must love my future wife for my sake, for I feel that Rebecca is formed to make me happy. You are no stranger to the excellence of this young creature, for it is you, Mrs. Chesterville, who have made her what she is, by your precept and example."

“ Dear Rebecca,” cried Mrs. Chesterville, tenderly embracing her, “ if you are not happy it must be your own fault. You possess every thing in the fair prospect before you to make you so. God bless and preserve you both,” she added, taking a hand of each, and uniting them.

“ I am a poor hand at making speeches,” interrupted Mr. Templeton, “ therefore cannot say half I feel or wish ; but this I am certain, if kindness and wealth can procure happiness, it is Rebecca’s for ever !”

Charlotte Chesterville, who stood in silent wonder, contemplating a scene which at first she did not comprehend, now hastily exclaimed, patting Rebecca, “ O now I guess what all this means ;” and looking archly in her face, “ You are going, Rebecca, to be married, and I hope I am sent for to be bridesmaid ; not that I should have had that honour, I suppose, had my elder sister been at home ; so I shall even dance at your

wedding, and twine some white roses in those fair silken tresses."

"And will you, dear saucy Charlotte," interrupted Rebecca, suffused with blushes, "be my bridesmaid?"

"To be sure I will; I hope the wedding is to be soon," she whispered, "for delays are dangerous; for, with a man of Mr. Templeton's age, when the report gets wing, we shall have all the young fellows within a hundred miles hanging and drowning themselves in very spite, that your guardian has borne off in triumph so lovely a prize."

Mr. Templeton and Mrs. Chester-ville left the young people together, when the lively Charlotte proceeded giddily: "I should like, if old Time could clip at least twenty years from Mr. Templeton's age. Let me see, he would then be, I should guess, about five and twenty, and you not eighteen. Scatter a few auburn locks, instead of that huge wig over his forehead; take those odious

spectacles from his nose, and, in short; quite metamorphose him."

"Fie, fie, Charlotte," interrupted Rebecca, somewhat hurt, and vainly trying to smile, "you always allow your vivacity to run away with your natural good sense; but I forgive you, assured you would not, intentionally, give me pain."

"You know I must have my joke," replied Charlotte, very seriously, "though I meant not at the expence of my friend. I know Mr. Templeton is a worthy soul, and I have no doubt will make you happy."

The thoughtless Charlotte then flew to the harpsichord, and, in a sportive manner, sung from Dryden's ode —

"Happy, happy, happy pair,
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserve the fair."

Mrs. Chesterville returned to the parlour, and just caught the last words of the air. "Charlotte is incorrigible,"

she said gravely. "Nothing will cure her except you deny her the pleasure of being your bridesmaid, if she is not on her good behaviour."

"Pray, dear mamma," she exclaimed gaily, "does not the very name of a wedding turn the heads of half the young misses under twenty. Rebecca knows that I mean no harm; and, in all sober dulness, I will put on a grave look, if you desire it, or be as prim and formal as the most starched old maid in the neighbourhood."

The conversation was interrupted by a summons to dinner; and the afternoon was devoted to business.

CHAP. XV.

IT was arranged for Charlotte to remain at Fairlawn-hall, while Mr. Templeton accompanied Mrs. Chesterville into Liverpool to make purchases, and see her husband, in regard to the necessary settlements.

Charlotte had just attained her fifteenth year. She was a tall, handsome girl, with a clear brown complexion, and a profusion of raven hair, falling in natural ringlets over her open brow and finely turned neck. Her large black eyes sparkled with intelligence, and had an arch expression of playfulness, the heralds of a lively temper, and a mind to which care was a stranger. Her vermilion lips and ivory teeth gave a lustrous expression to her face, which, without being strictly beautiful, was extremely

captivating. She still wore the simple dress of a girl, and was as great a romp.

Her buoyant spirits and lively sallies, now restrained to good manners on the present occasion, amused the naturally pensive Rebecca, who at times seemed to be lost in abstraction. The step she was going to take was one of the utmost importance, though she had no one either to consult or guide her, and hitherto too young to have formed any attachments, yet might not a time arrive when a more youthful lover would have gained her affections, and formed an union more suitable in years, and where not merely a sentiment of gratitude would have bound them to each other.

Yet to refuse Mr. Templeton's generous proposals, to disappoint his wishes, was altogether repugnant to her feelings. But she involuntarily shrunk from the dread of that ridicule to which so unequal an alliance would inevitably expose her ; had not the lively Charlotte Ches-

terville already seen it in such an absurd point of view, as not to have escaped her derision.

It was now, however, too late, had she even been so inclined to withdraw her consent; but she painfully felt that it was alone a sentiment of gratitude and respect that bound her to Mr. Templeton. Once, however, having promised to become his wife, she resolved to endeavour to fulfil those sacred and tender duties, with that watchful care for his happiness which he so much deserved and required from her.

The lively Charlotte was not given to much reflection. Like many young people, she acted from the impulse of the moment, and therefore perpetually erred. Warm-hearted, good humoured, and humane, she soon became aware that she had hurt the sensitive Rebecca by her heedlessness, and tried to make up for it by a succession of grateful attentions, which so entirely won her esteem, that

the absence of her friend Juliet was the less regretted.

Mrs. Chesterville, at the expiration of a week, returned to Fairlawn-hall, laden, not with finery, but a large assortment of the most elegant and well-chosen female attire.

Mr. Templeton the same evening opened a casket, and taking thence a valuable pearl necklace, with strings of the same, to decorate her hair, and a pair of bracelets, to one of which was attached his portrait, presented them to Rebecca.

“ These simple ornaments, sweet one,” he exclaimed, “ I consider more befitting your youthful years, and the loveliness of your mind and person, than all the glittering gewgaws with which females are generally too fond of bedizening themselves. These pearls are an emblem of your spotless self, and though the old weather-beaten face affixed to the bracelet is no ornament to an arm so fair, yet, in after years, Rebecca,

when you may look upon it, then, perhaps, it will call to mind the plain honest man who ever had your welfare and happiness nearest his heart."

Rebecca was quite subdued. Her tears fell fast on the hand stretched out towards her, which she silently pressed to her lips, for utterance was at the moment denied.

Charlotte Chesterville was penetrated by the tender scene; but wishing to rally back Rebecca's spirits, she exclaimed, gaily, "Have you not got, dear Sir, some pretty wedding gift for the fair bridesmaid?"

"To be sure I have, my pretty Charlotte," he replied, significantly, and drew from a case a locket containing Rebecca's fair hair, set round with pearls, and clasped it round her neck.

"This is kind, indeed," answered Charlotte, her eyes sparkling with delight. "Dearest Rebecca, I shall henceforth always wear you as a precious

bosom friend." She pressed the locket to her lips, and gracefully acknowledged Mr. Templeton's generous gift.

The following week the marriage was to take place, at an early hour, by special licence, in the adjacent village church. Mr. Templeton did not mean it to be private; he wished to give it publicity, by keeping open house for three days to those guests who were inclined to witness his felicity; nor was any expense to be spared for sumptuous entertainment.

The Reverend Doctor Arnold, who was requested to select Rebecca's library by Mr. Templeton, agreed to perform the ceremony. He was a man highly respected in Liverpool, where he held a considerable living.

CHAP. XVI.

THE day for the celebration of the marriage at length arrived.

At an early hour all the house were up and in commotion. Servants running with preparations in all directions.

The morning was bright and lovely. Every flower glittering with dew and sunshine; myriads of birds, already with their matin songs, were echoing in the joyous day; garlands of roses, entwined with lilies, were hung round the hall, and marble vases, filled with the finest exotics, stood on the mantel-piece, emitting the most delicious perfume. The old harper had come over from Wales, and he struck up a lively tune, which made the old walls reverberate with its melody. The ancient house-

keeper was drest in her yellow damask, and the grey-haired butler in his dark blue suit, laced with gold, and a large bouquet of the choicest flowers placed in his button-hole. Smiling happiness was spread over every face.

In the midst of this gladsome scene, (the bridal party all assembled, the bride all loveliness, decked in her robe of white satin,) a stranger rushed impetuously into the room, and with a wild, haggard appearance, advanced towards Mr. Templeton, who stood in silent amazement. It was his brother!

With looks of proud indignation he surveyed the bridegroom, nor heeded any of the company, not even the bride, who had fainted.

“The report, then,” he exclaimed with vehemence, “is not false. I come myself to learn the truth. That my brother Templeton had become so great an idiot as to marry a girl not yet seventeen,

a child in years, of low degree, pennyless as low, I could not credit."

"I come," he continued, with reproachful displeasure, "for the honour of our ancient house, for the honour of our noble name, to plead, to dissuade you from so rash a step. Affix not, I pray you, such a stigma to a family so highly born. I have travelled far and rapidly, for I dreaded being too late. For your reputation's sake I have even emerged again into the world — a world I had forsworn for ever."

"Retreat from it again, Sir Ambrose," cried Mr. Templeton, in a commanding and indignant voice; "your presence here is neither sought nor required; except, indeed," he added, in milder tone, "you are pleased to join that ceremony which so soon is to constitute the future happiness of my life. Act as a brother, and give away the bride."

Sir Ambrose, with a scornful smile, darted his eyes towards the spot where

Rebecca, pale and sinking with terror, was just recovering from the swoon into which she had fallen.

Mr. Templeton tenderly approached, "Be not afraid," he said, with soothing fondness. "Look up, my precious Rebecca."

"Rebecca! Rebecca!" exclaimed Sir Ambrose, with an expression of horror, an ashy paleness spreading over his face, as he fearfully surveyed her. "Whence come ye, fair vision of another world?" he continued, appalled. "It cannot be — it is some terrible delusion of my optic sense. But if, indeed, ye are Rebecca Russell, the child predicted to be — not your, but my wife! — the child who —" He paused, and stood with such a ghastly, bewildered look, the ladies of the company slunk aside, and Rebecca, uttering a piercing shriek, again sunk senseless on the floor, as she vainly endeavoured to grasp Mr. Templeton's hand.

"Yes, Sir Ambrose, it is Rebecca

Russell that you see," returned Mr. Templeton, as he fixed his eye upon him, with such a penetrating expression, he shrunk beneath it. "See in her the child of my adoption, and now see in her my future wife. What I would further say, it is best should meet alone your private ear; nor longer now detain us."

"Mr. Chesterville," continued he, "conduct the lovely bride to her carriage."

Mr. Chesterville was going to lead Rebecca forth, when Sir Ambrose, stepping between them, exclaimed with fierceness, "It may not be. Proceed no further. By that *Fate*, which *now* I seek not to overrule, Rebecca Russell is *my destined wife*. The stars so predicted at her birth. I cast her horoscope; and in all various shapes and figures that I formed, still Rebecca was my destined wife. As such I claim her; nor do we part except by death alone."

Mr. Templeton stood aghast; while

all the gay assembled group believed a madman had broke loose upon them, and the ladies fled the room.

Rebecca, on coming to herself, cast her eyes timidly around, and sighing heavily, hid her face on Mr. Templeton's arm, which gave her support.

"Fear not, beloved Rebecca," he cried; "with my life I will protect you. You are mine, by every promise sacred and honourable. My brother dare not — he cannot tear you from me."

Sir Ambrose stood over her with looks of interest and impatience.

"Do you not recollect me, Rebecca?" he said, in a reproachful tone of tender enquiry. Do you not remember that it was I who many a day in your early childhood, fondled you on my knee at Gloomore Castle?"

"But," she interrupted quickly, and with a bewildered look, as she ardently gazed on him, "if I remember rightly, you also left me; and to the compassion

of poor Michael Barton I owe my present existence. I was very young, and can only imperfectly recall, like some fond, idle dream, those days of childish prattle, when somebody, it might be you, loved the little Rebecca. But wherefore come you now?" she continued, with looks of earnest enquiry, "my destiny is fixed, unaltered, nor can you claim me."

"Then," interrupted Sir Ambrose, impatiently, "you no longer love me; and all those infantine caresses, once so fondly lavished, are set at nought?"

"I see you now, Sir Ambrose," she returned, with firmness, "as the brother of my destined husband; as such, I fain respect, esteem you: but for those years gone by, of which you speak, which live so feebly in my memory, and are associated with such a cloud of mystery, I have yet to learn from whence I came, and wherefore I became the child of your adoption. I require you, Sir Ambrose, to unfold my parentage and name."

“It is unnecessary. Riches, titles, honours, are before you. Young, beautiful, though humbly born, you will adorn that rank the *Fates predicted* for you.”

“Rebecca,” interrupted Mr. Templeton, “your father’s name is *Russell*, sprung from honest and industrious parents; my brother took you from your humble parents, and by him you were adopted; why transferred to me, cannot be revealed. But,” he proceeded, impatiently, “time wears away, and this delay, this interruption is most unseasonable.”

“Brother,” added Mr. Templeton, “you shall give the bride away. Prove the father you professed yourself, and consider her as indeed your daughter.”

“Not *your bride*, brother Frederic,” he exclaimed with vehemence, “but *mine* — no marriage rites I witness, save mine own. I forbid the ceremony to pass, and at your peril attempt it.” *

* Just as the time arrived for celebrating the nuptials, the Yorkshire Knight arrived at his

“This contest, dear Rebecca,” said Mr. Templeton, “is unfitted for your tender spirits. Retire to your chamber, my love,” gently leading her to the door; “whither Charlotte Chesterville will attend you for the present.”

Mrs. Chesterville remained, and Rebecca left the drawing-room.

brother's seat in Lancashire, and was not a little surprised to find this maiden, whom the stars had portended so fatally, as he thought, to be his wife, alive, and so near becoming his kinswoman. The brothers had a great altercation, and the Yorkshire Knight succeeded at last in suspending the nuptials.

Old Tradition.

CHAP. XVII.

REBECCA was now convinced, of what she had long conjectured, that Sir Ambrose Templeton was the unknown, mysterious person with whom, in infancy, she had dwelt. But wherefore the authority he now asserted, she could not comprehend; or why impede her nuptials with his brother, since Mr. Templeton had just declared her parents were of lowly state, and bore the name of Russell.

Stern, authoritative, as were the looks and manner of Sir Ambrose, Rebecca, notwithstanding, felt a sentiment of recollected tenderness revive in her bosom, on the recognition that he was indeed the ideal person whom her fancy had created as the person who formerly had cherished her with parental fondness. Whence the

cause why so suddenly he seemed to have abandoned her, she knew nor guessed not ; her grateful heart now throbbed with something like esteem for the only parent and benefactor she in infancy had known.

There is a feeling of early associations so closely linked with our existence, that however pleasing the ties formed in riper years, the heart insensibly recurs to that youthful period which cannot be blotted from the memory, and new awakened towards Sir Ambrose Templeton a something bordering on regard. She viewed him not as the sage magician, not as the dissolver of an union, in which her affections took no warmer share than gratitude and esteem had prompted, but as the object on whom alone her infantine affection had been lavished, and who had bestowed upon her every kindness and indulgence in his power.

While these reflections were passing in Rebecca's mind, a high disputation took

place between the brothers. Each claimed a right and authority over Rebecca ; Sir Ambrose convinced that nothing less than a miracle could have thrown her under his brother's cognizance ; and that some over-ruling planet that preceded her future destiny, had preserved her life. Anxiously he sought to learn through what means she had been consigned to Mr. Templeton's care ; but on that subject his brother maintained a determined silence : he would not betray the confidence Valerno had reposed in him, nor the precious charge which he had committed to him.

Sir Ambrose, who firmly believed that every event in life was guided by a destiny it was impossible to avert, now as ardently sought to obtain the lovely Rebecca as before he had endeavoured to defeat the prediction foretold in the horoscope.

As neither of the brothers could be induced, by any strength of argument, to resign what they each considered their

just pretension to Rebecca, it was suggested by Mr. Chesterville, the point should be referred to herself, and learn her real sentiments towards each.

The point being so arranged, Mrs. Chesterville was sent to request Rebecca's presence below, for Mr. Templeton would hear from her lips alone a suspension of that ceremony, which, in less than an hour, would have made her his for ever, and now deferred by so extraordinary a circumstance as the present.

Rebecca, pale, trembling, and sinking with the various emotions which overwhelmed her, was led into the drawing-room (so recently presenting so different a scene) by Mrs. Chesterville.

Each brother eagerly advanced at once to address her, but Sir Ambrose, with conscious and proud superiority, waving his hand vehemently, exclaimed, "By your leave, Mr. Templeton, I claim a prior right to put a few questions to Rebecca. First, by birth; secondly, be-

cause she was the child of my adoption before she was known to you."

Mr. Templeton bit his lips, looked very uneasy, and, with hasty steps, paced the room.

"Rebecca," Sir Ambrose said, in a voice of suppressed agitation, and fixing his eagle eyes upon her, "I ask you once more, if all the tenderness which I bestowed on your infant years is forgotten? I ask likewise to know, if it is from sentiments of pure disinterested affection you would have suffered my brother to lead you to the altar?"

"At the period, Sir Ambrose," replied Rebecca, with dignity and courage, "I became separated from you, I was too young to possess sense how properly to estimate the kindness you were pleased to bestow upon me; your tender indulgence I only remember as an imperfect dream; not such, Sir," she proceeded, looking with beaming eyes towards Mr. Templeton, "is the remembrance of the pa-

rental care your respected brother has taken of me since that early period. To him I owe that education which he fondly considers has rendered me not unworthy that sphere to which his kind partiality would have exalted me.

“I am bound,” she continued, “to Mr. Templeton by every sentiment of respect and gratitude; to have rendered him happy would have proved the sole study of my life. But I feel, unfortunately, that now I have no right to dispose of myself, if, indeed, you are resolved to assert that authority and power over me which, I suppose, my parents allowed when consigned to your protection.

“If Sir,” Rebecca proceeded, “I am, as you say, of lowly birth, poor, but descended from honest parents, I humbly request that I now may be permitted to return to them; I am persuaded they will rejoice to again receive their long absent child.

“To them I return greatly enriched, for I am given the means of contributing to their future support and comfort. If I am blessed with brothers and sisters, what new joy to be folded in their arms?”

Neither of the brothers would listen to Rebecca's proposal; they displayed the utmost impatience whilst she spoke, nor would they relinquish the right they considered they had of possession.

Vain was every argument used by Rebecca, and Mr. and Mrs. Chesterville, to combat the violent emotions of one brother, and the calm determined firmness of the other. At length Mrs. Chesterville wisely proposed that Rebecca should accompany her back to Liverpool, and there await the decision of the brothers as to her future destiny.

Rebecca, sick at heart, from the extraordinary events of the day, eagerly entreated permission to go with Mrs. Chesterville, which, after much debate, was at length given, as the wisest alter-

native for the present, and Rebecca was suffered to leave them, to take off her bridal finery, and prepare for her short journey.

All wedding festivities were now at an end at Fairlawn-hall for that day, if not for ever. The invited guests all, except Mr. Chesterville, were quietly suffered to depart; music no longer sounded in the hall; the peasantry were given refreshments, and desired to go home; and nothing but an aspect of the most gloomy melancholy succeeded to that joyous air which prevailed at early dawn.

Rebecca, more dead than alive, stepped into the carriage along with Mrs. Chesterville and Charlotte, who did all in their power to comfort her.

Sir Ambrose Templeton withdrew to one of the now deserted apartments. His brother left him to himself, and was as much consoled as his disappointment admitted by the friendly advice and society of the warm-hearted Mr. Chesterville.

CHAP. XVIII.

WHEN Rebecca was left to herself, with leisure for reflection, she began to consider the contest between the two brothers of so serious a nature, she was now desirous to withdraw her promised hand, and finally give up Mr. Templeton. In the alliance she only foresaw misery and anxiety, under existing circumstances. It was now her earnest wish to return to her parents. Though they were strangers to her, yet her heart yearned towards them, and she suggested her wish to Mrs. Chesterville. She, however, thought, from Rebecca's refined education, with the natural elegance of her mind and manners, that a step by no means advisable; neither did she consider

it would be prudent for her in future to reside at Fairlawn-hall ; she therefore merely and kindly said, "Be assured, dear Rebecca, we shall not tire of your company ; therefore, I beg you will consider our house your future home ; for, under existing circumstances, it is the most proper. Hereafter, it may be more suitable to go to your parents. Just now it would appear not merely indelicate, but rebelling against the wishes of poor Mr. Templeton, to place yourself beneath any roof save mine."

The more Rebecca pondered on the events of former days, the more firmly she became convinced of the propriety of declining the honour of Mr. Templeton's hand. She did not communicate her intention to Mrs. Chesterville, afraid she would plead in his behalf ; but having requested to be left alone, she sat down and wrote the following letter, as soon as she acquired sufficient composure.

“To Frederic Templeton, Esq.

“Liverpool, May 3, 16—.

“My Dear, Respected Guardian.—
As such, allow your highly favoured Rebecca still to address you ; to express my gratitude for all the generous benefits conferred upon me ; to add that you, Sir, will always possess that respectful and duteous affection, it would have been the study of my future life to have shown, had I been exalted to the title of your wife — a title which you did not consider me unworthy to have claimed.

“I humbly and earnestly entreat, Sir, I may not be the unhappy cause of serious contention between two brothers, for each of whom I entertain sincere veneration — nor, wilfully, would I give you a moment’s pain ; but suffer me to be released from those vows which so nearly had been ratified at the altar ; for, under existing circumstances, it is impossible for me to acquiesce in the honour you intended, in making me your

wife. Rather let me return to the lowly sphere in which I was born. I consider it no disgrace to belong to poor but honest parents ; I am their offspring, and as such, my heart yearns towards them.

“ Sir Ambrose Templeton is not ignorant from whence he took me ; to him, then, I respectfully refer, and require of him to restore me to my parents.

“ Forgive, my dear guardian, the boldness of your ward, in thus presuming to address you. Waiting with impatience the indulgence of your answer, I remain, most honoured Sir,

“ Your ever grateful, humble servant,
“ REBECCA.”

Rebecca's mind was relieved after dispatching her letter, which was speedily answered by the arrival of the brothers at Liverpool, who, on being announced, immediately demanded an interview.

Mrs. Chesterville was not surprised, and by no means pleased, when she saw

them each in a state of high agitation ; she was, however, inexpressibly grieved, when Mr. Templeton, on taking her aside, showed her the contents of Rebecca's letter ; as well as offended, that she had not been consulted on the occasion.

Rebecca entered, pale and dejected, her eyes heavy for want of sleep, and her whole appearance languid.

“So far I am satisfied, Rebecca,” cried the knight, with a proud look of triumph, “that you have given up, I understand, all idea of marrying my brother. But not so easily do I relinquish you.

“You are not ignorant,” he continued, “that I am a predestinarian, and cannot over-rule our appointed destiny. It is unnecessary now to relate my fruitless attempts to circumvent the fate your stars predicted — our *fates*, our destinies are *one*. They are so closely linked together, it is impossible to avert them.

“Disappointed,” he continued, “in my early prospects, blighted in my hap-

piness, deceived where most I trusted, in a fatal moment I made a rash and solemn vow of celibacy. But it is not for man to determine for himself what he wills. We must steer that course appointed from the hour of our birth, to that which dooms us to oblivion, and which no human power can controvert. I therefore, Rebecca," he added, with a determined firmness, "claim you as the wife our fates have pointed out. To controul the one, or over-rule the other, is, I am now convinced, utterly impossible."

"Your arguments," interrupted Rebecca, "are as futile as your opinions are impious and erroneous — you build them on a shallow foundation. Without religion or truth for your support, your days are clouded by error. No sunshine of hope gladdens your prospect; you seem to consider yourself only a machine, which, acting upon certain springs, turns alone to one point. You look not upon

yourself as a free agent. Influenced to good, if under the Divine protection; and actuated to all that is vicious, if unhappily, under the dominion of the Evil one."

"Well done, my little damsel," exclaimed Mr. Templeton, rubbing his hands with delight, having listened to Rebecca in silent admiration. "A second Daniel, as Gratiano says, in the Merchant of Venice; a second Daniel. Proceed, for there is sense and truth in your wisdom. I shall henceforth have a better opinion of the learning of women, finding they can argue so ably when put to the test."

"Women's words," cried Sir Ambrose, with scornful impatience, "I set at nought. This is mere folly and trifling. Answer this question, Rebecca," he proceeded, looking with earnest enquiry, "and do not deceive me. Wear you not a certain charm, which I placed on your person in infant years? You surely

must ; for it has guarded you from danger by sea and land ; and, whilst you wear it, no harm can touch you."

"That I have worn it, Sir," she replied, "and still do wear the amulet, is most true. Think not it is from any faith I put in it, but simply from the hope that it might lead to the discovery of my name and family ; for I observed on the ring to which the chain is fastened, are cut the initials of some of those who are, perhaps, my kindred. But since," she proceeded, with firmness and indignation, "it is a magic charm, thus I tear it from my bosom, and thus with this protest I throw it from me.

"When this magic ring (taking off the amulet) is found by *me, then and only then*, Sir Ambrose Templeton shall claim my hand, and lead me to the altar."

"Oh ye flowing river," she added, with serious fervour, "bear this impious ring into the deep recesses of your mighty waters. To your fathomless deep

I consign this amulet ; and may I never see ye more."

She threw the ring, the chain, amulet into the river Mersey, which flowed at the foot of the lawn which bounded Mr. Chesterville's pleasure-grounds.

"But remember, Rebecca," said Sir Ambrose Templeton, snatching her arm, "that if this ring, (for 'tis a magic one,) ever meets your eye, that you are mine ; I will follow, I will claim you, though it were to the world's end."

"What I have said," she replied, "I mean not to unsay. If this magic ring returns to my possession, you may claim me for your wife. I shall fulfil my promise, but not till then ; so hear me Heaven !"

"So be it !" cried Sir Ambrose, with a look of triumph. "For mine you will be."

After this extraordinary prediction he departed, with apparent satisfaction, leaving Rebecca overwhelmed with terror and dismay.

CHAP. XIX.

MR. Templeton now tenderly approached Rebecca, and taking her passive hand, silently and fondly gazed on her.

“Leave me, dearest Sir, I entreat,” she said, in a feeble accent. “Think no more of the wretched Rebecca. Suffer me, I earnestly beg, to be restored to my parents. You cannot be ignorant where they dwell. To now listen to your wishes respecting me is in vain. Nothing but misery, I am convinced, could ensue from so unequal an alliance. I perceive it now in a proper point of view, and wonder at my blindness and folly, for which I am justly punished. I had no right, no pretension to aspire to the elevated sphere in which your fond partiality would have placed me. My determination is unalterably fixed. Even

did I assent to our union, your brother, so terrible in threats, would no doubt endeavour to baffle it; and, though he might not succeed, his dreadful malediction would prove fatal to the happiness of both.

“Return then, my dear, respected guardian,” she cried, bursting into a flood of tears, “who so long have sheltered me by your bounty and tenderness; and if the knowledge,” she added, quite subdued, “that the poor Rebecca is not less wretched than yourself will prove any consolation, take with you that assurance. May Heaven support and reward you for all your goodness!

“God bless you, dear Sir,” she cried, as she, with respectful tenderness, pressed his hand to her lips, and would have quitted him, for she was quite overcome; but Mr. Templeton forcibly detaining her, said, “A word or two more, Rebecca, before we part.

“If,” Mr. Templeton continued, in a

tremulous voice, "you are determined, Rebecca, not to marry me, which is somewhat hard, and a sore trial, considering how soon you would have been mine, in spite of my crazy brother, promise, at least, that for a short time you will remain with my sister-in-law, and then I may have the comfort of sometimes seeing you, my sweet Rebecca."

"I will promise," she answered, with a faint smile, "cheerfully promise, to remain with Mrs. Chesterville, if, after a stated time, you will suffer me to be conducted to my parents. How unnatural must they think their child, never to have seen or enquired after them?"

"Good-hearted, excellent Rebecca!" interrupted Mr. Templeton, wiping a falling tear from his eyes. "But," he continued, "I am, I assure you, quite ignorant where your parents live. I understand your father is an honest, industrious farmer, of the name of Russell, and rents a small place of my brother; but

however, my dear love, if it will set your heart at rest, I will send one of my people all the way to Gloomore Castle, to find out from one of the domestics the name of the place where Farmer Russell lives."

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Chesterville, who had intentionally kept away. With quick steps she now advanced. "Sir Ambrose," she said, "is just departed, apparently beside himself. He vows vengeance against you, Mr. Templeton, if you attempt marrying Rebecca. With the utmost difficulty Mr. Chesterville prevented him from carrying Rebecca, perforce, back with him to Gloomore Castle. He was so exasperated with Rebecca for throwing her amulet into the river Mersey, he was only to be pacified by the assurance that she should remain for the present with us. He then departed, saying he should soon return."

Mrs. Chesterville prudently advised

Mr. Templeton to go back immediately to Fairlawn-hall, kindly offering to accompany him thither.

He declined her proposal ; said, in his melancholy state, he was best alone ; and, after taking a tender and affecting leave of Rebecca, with a heavy heart stepped into his carriage for his desolate home.

Rebecca's frame and spirits were so much shook by the late disastrous events, she begged leave to pass her hours in her chamber, for the bustle of Mr. Chesterville's house was too much for her. She experienced comfort and consolation from the unexpected return of Juliet, who usually lived with her grandmother, but had come home in consequence of having heard of the intended wedding, for a few days. Naturally serious and thoughtful, there was a tenderness and native delicacy in her character, which, on the present occasion, greatly soothed Rebecca's affliction. To

Juliet she opened her heart, without restraint ; of Charlotte's raillery she was half afraid, though her warm and generous heart had displayed much sympathy on the termination of their promised rejoicings.

Mr. Chesterville was the complete man of business. His sole thoughts and time being occupied in his mercantile concerns, for his was one of the largest houses in Liverpool ; he never entered into the domestic arrangements of his family, which were all left to his wife. He was a fond husband, an indulgent father, and a man much respected for the liberality, yet integrity of his character. He did not speculate beyond his means ; he defrauded no man ; but he did acts of generosity and kindness from his perfect knowledge of business, and all his world centered in the counting-house. His family were no less flourishing than amiable. The young men applied to business with diligence

and attention ; they were obliging and polite without servility ; and Mr. Chesterville was considered the best mercantile house in Liverpool for honesty, application, and prosperity. His daughters were modest, unsophisticated girls ; cheerful, good-humoured, with manners at once easy and affable. They had early been taught to consider the will of their parents the law that was to govern their actions ; and accustomed to endure contradiction, though never denied reasonable indulgence, they looked up to their parents with reverence and unbounded affection. They bore no resemblance to the young women of the present century, for they neither despised nor scoffed at old age. They venerated their grandmother ; and Juliet, to lighten her infirmities, and cheer her declining years, almost constantly lived with her. They could laugh and enjoy a lively joke ; but they were quite ignorant of that species of ridicule called

quizzing ; they were sprightly without being flippant ; good-natured without being silly. Such were the family of the Chestervilles, with whom, for the present, Rebecca took up her abode.

CHAP. XX.

Mrs. Chesterville, who marked with alarm the wildness and disappointment portrayed in the countenance of Sir Ambrose Templeton, and anticipating further molestation on behalf of Rebecca, wisely proposed to her husband removing from the neighbourhood for the present, and accompanying her to the borders of one of the most secluded of the Lakes.

All was arranged for the journey, and the chaise ordered to be at the door early in the morning, when an hour or two or before the time appointed for setting out, the house was alarmed by the arrival of the groom from Fairlawn-hall, who had ridden with the swiftness of an express.

He brought a letter for Mrs. Ches-

terville from the housekeeper, informing her that her master had been seized with the gout in his stomach, in consequence of the late agitations which he had experienced, and now lay dangerously ill from the violence of the attack.

Not a moment was lost after perusing the letter, in sending for the most skillful physician in Liverpool. Mrs. Chesterville stept with him into the post-chaise which was to have taken her and Rebecca to Furness, after imparting to her the sad intelligence.

Rebecca had earnestly entreated leave to accompany Mrs. Chesterville, for she loved and respected Mr. Templeton with the affection of a daughter. Mrs. Chesterville resisted her entreaty, sensible her presence would only agitate the patient, and render Rebecca doubly unhappy.

Dr. R—— found Mr. Templeton in the last agonies of death ; no human aid

could save him ; but he was sensible, and knew Mrs. Chesterville.

“ This, my dear sister-in-law,” he said, grasping her hand, “ is a melancholy ending of my intended happiness with poor dear Rebecca ; but God’s will be done. I have,” he added, faintly, at broken intervals, “ taken care of Rebecca’s interests. Mr. Chesterville will see that justice is done by her in my will. Your husband is my sole executor. I have amply provided for the dear child. I hope she will be happy in her future lot. For yourself, my dear sister-in-law, you will be rewarded for all the benefits which you have rendered us.”

All this was uttered in broken sentences, to which he was hardly able to give utterance. Soon after the excellent Mr. Templeton expired.

The shock which he had sustained, first, in being deprived of the lovely Rebecca at the moment they were going to be united ; and next, at his brother’s

cruel and flighty conduct, took such a fatal effect upon a gouty constitution, the disorder flew with sudden violence to his stomach, that before medical assistance could be obtained, his life was in imminent danger.

Mrs. Chesterville had such a sincere regard for Mr. Templeton, she was inexpressibly shocked and grieved by an event so sudden and afflictive. The benevolence and excellence of his character; the mildness of his manners; his acts of charity to the necessitous, made him so much respected and beloved in the neighbourhood in which he lived, that few persons would be more missed than Mr. Templeton, and none more lamented.

Mrs. Chesterville felt much for Rebecca, convinced that no wealth could supply the loss she sustained in such a tender indulgent friend as Mr. Templeton had proved; not only lavishing on her every kindness, but rendering her an

accomplished and elegant young woman, an ornament to society, and excellent in every moral sense from her virtuous education.

Mrs. Chesterville having put seals on every thing, sent immediately for her husband, and desired Rebecca (to whom she wrote a few hasty lines, communicating the sad intelligence,) to remain with her daughter at Liverpool until her return.

The news of Mr. Templeton's death plunged Rebecca into the deepest affliction ; nor could all the soothing kindness she received from Charlotte Chesterville mitigate the anguish of her heart.

Mr. Templeton was so anxious, on the annulment of his marriage, to render Rebecca independent, he immediately, on his return to Fairlawn-hall, put a codicil to his will, bequeathing to his ward, Rebecca Russel, ten thousand pounds in funded property, together with his estate, Grove-house, at Stratford-le-Bow, in the

county of Essex. The estate on which he resided went to his brother, Sir Ambrose, at his demise.

He placed her, during her minority, which was four years, under the entire guardianship of Mr. Chesterville, with whom she was to reside in the event of her remaining unmarried, till she attained the age of one-and-twenty.

CHAP. XXI.

REBECCA wore deep mourning for her lamented guardian. She never more returned to Fairlawn-hall, which she had quitted under such afflictive circumstances. The rapid succession of events which so recently happened, were of a nature so extraordinary and mournful, her health and spirits became materially injured, and Mrs. Chesterville was so alarmed, she at length consulted a physician, who gave it as his opinion that it would be advisable to change the air to a milder climate for some time.

On this suggestion Mr. Chesterville desired his wife to accompany him, along with Rebecca and Charlotte, to London, and settle her in the neighbourhood, as it was necessary for him to inspect the estate at Stratford-le-Bow, bequeathed to

her by Mr. Templeton. She henceforth took the name of her parents, and was now called Miss Russell. The sudden death of her guardian placed her not merely in a state of independence, but in a station of life which his extraordinary liberality had rendered a subject of surprise in the neighbourhood; for she now was exalted to the title of an *Heiress*, and meekly as she assumed the title, it was with a painful sentiment of the envy she excited, from the mystery which was attached to her birth, and the family from whom she sprang.

Rebecca, listless and unhappy, was glad to change the scene, and made preparations for a journey which, at another time, would have been delightful.

The spring was forward and lovely; and, as they travelled by easy stages, she had the opportunity of seeing the country to advantage. As they left the wild barren scenery of the north, and entered the southern counties, Rebecca was

charmed with the soft sylvan luxuriance of that part of England. The graceful beauty of the women and children she was particularly struck with. Their gentle manners, soft voices, pure accent, and courteous way of speaking; even their rural villages seemed to possess a superior air of refinement. Their gardens were so neatly and tastefully drest up, as to give a degree of elegance to even the smallest habitations, embowered in woodbines and roses.

How immense appeared the population and traffic as they approached the metropolis, yet it struck Rebecca as almost a region of smoke; so heavy even in the month of May was the atmosphere amidst which rose the magnificent cupola of St. Paul's, encompassed by one interminable pile of buildings, with succession after succession of long narrow streets, with ancient and irregular built houses, scarcely admitting either a cur-

rent of air, or room for carriages and passengers without inconvenience.

Passing through the centre of the city they were set down at the door of a spacious mansion in Birchin Lane; in so confined a spot Rebecca was surprised to find such a commodious dwelling; when they entered a handsome spacious hall, and ascended a wide, noble staircase to the apartment above.

It was the mercantile house of Mr. Chesterville's friend. They were kindly received by Mr. and Mrs. Mason, plain, worthy people.

Their mode of life was much on the same plan as what Rebecca had been accustomed to at Liverpool; except that she found all the members of it wore a look of greater ease and bustling activity.

Always used to the unrestrained freedom of the country, with a large garden, even at Mr. Chesterville's, to range in, she felt as if she now was shut up in a prison, so close and dark was even the

most spacious of the apartments, and where it seemed impossible for the sun to penetrate. She literally, in her debilitated state, seemed to pant for air, and was by no means delighted with her first specimen of a London life, from the confinement and restraint she was compelled to suffer. She learnt, with evident vexation, that it was improper for young ladies to go abroad unattended. When she proposed to Charlotte to take a walk, she opened her eyes with astonishment, and exclaimed, "What did you say? Mamma would think, Rebecca, that you had taken leave of your senses. In the first place we should be stared at for two country bumpkins; and, in the next, which would be far worse, we should lose ourselves in the endless labyrinth of streets by which you see we are surrounded. I'll tell you what I will do, however, to console you, that you may not quite expire for want of air, though I cannot vouch for its purity.

"Come along with me," continued the lively Charlotte, "to the top of the house. You know I am a famous climber; there you will find breathing room, if you have a steadier head than the giddy Charlotte to mount to the leads. In truth, it is well worth your while, for you will see a glorious prospect, a city of churches, spires, towers, public edifices, bridges, with a mass of shipping, making altogether a surprising and most imposing view. Follow me, Rebecca," she added, taking her arm, "I will show you the way. This morning little Tom, as they called the shop-boy, climbed a sort of stair ladder, and went up aloft so dexterously, I had the curiosity (a quality females seldom want), after he had departed, just to take a peep, and was amply repaid for my trouble.

"Suppose," Charlotte proceeded, "I call the boy to point out some of the public edifices, for they are innumerable."

Away ran Charlotte, she soon returned

with little Tom, an acute lad ; he carefully handed the young ladies to the leads.

Rebecca was filled with astonishment and delight. The panoramic view she had of London was magnificent. Little Tom pointed out, rising above London Bridge, the heavy fortress the Tower, with its four pinnacles. Venerable and grand Westminster Abbey, Lambeth Palace, washed by the magnificent Thames ; the noble structure, Somerset-House ; the Temple Gardens ; St. Paul's Cathedral, at that period rebuilding by Sir Christopher Wren, with several of the most prominent churches.

Rebecca could have gazed long, without wearying, on this wonderful city ; but the noble Thames, with its little world of shipping, and the perpetual moving scene of vessels, barges, boats, with the traffic carried on upon the water, was by far the most amusing objects, from the activity and expertness in the people,

conveying the idea that time was so important, that a minute lost would prove their ruin.

Mrs. Chesterville was surprised when Rebecca informed her where she had been.

"That mad-cap Charlotte," exclaimed she, "will certainly come to an untimely end some day or another, climbing like a tom-boy to the top of the house."

"Really, mamma," she interrupted, "if I had not taken pity on Rebecca she actually would have died for want of air. I thought, for variety's sake, she might swallow some of the London smoke, though not, I admit, the most fragrant nosegay in the month of May; but then there is a breeze wafted from the river; and to die from suffocation, when she came to taste the pleasures of London, would be rather a mortifying circumstance."

"Charlotte has afforded me great delight and amusement," interrupted Re-

becca. "Being accustomed to the bustle of a seaport at Liverpool, less wonder was excited as I gazed on the mass of shipping, than otherwise would have been the case. The extent of London, so crowded with buildings, so thickly intermixed with noble edifices, and such a countless number of grand churches, have, I own, surpassed all that my imagination could have painted of the sublime and beautiful; and I really am very much obliged to Charlotte."

Mrs. Mason politely offered to attend them to the play; but Rebecca had no inclination to see any public diversion, and they remained satisfied with merely visiting the Tower, Westminster Abbey, and St. Paul's Cathedral.

CHAP. XXII.

WHEN Sir Ambrose Templeton officially received the news of his brother's death, he instantly would have set out for Fairlawn-hall, had not the late perturbed state of his mind brought on a brain fever, from which he was only just recovering.

The grace and beauty of Rebecca had quite subdued him. His whole soul was now bent on possessing her. He considered that he not only had a prior but a fuller claim to her hand, and was resolved to let no endeavour escape for the accomplishment of his wishes. He felt an internal conviction that she finally would be his ; for that fate, which so wonderfully had defeated every attempt to destroy her, would still preside over her destiny, and ultimately effect their union.

The large property bequeathed to Rebecca by his brother did not surprise him ; neither was it displeasing. Possessed of an ample fortune, of which he made little use, and experienced no enjoyment, he quietly suffered her to come into possession of the fortune which was left her.

Rebecca, in the meantime, visited, along with Mr. and Mrs. Chesterville, the estate at Stratford-le-Bow ; the surrounding country (for in 16— it was the country) affording little variety of prospect. Rebecca, from being used to live amidst wide tracts of uninclosed country, bounded by lofty mountains, and watered by clear, rapid streams, was much struck with the different features of the present scenery ; the rich verdant meadows, formally intersected with green hedgerows, now full of the white-blossomed thorn, the flowering May, and crowned with the thin, tall poplars, with the river Lea sluggishly creeping through the plain.

The number of populous villages spread in all directions, with handsome spires and towers of churches breaking their uniformity, gave a cheerful aspect to what seemed to be one unbounded level plain.

Grove-House, the name of the late Mr. Templeton's estate, was a large, substantial mansion, formally built of red brick; the front partially concealed by venerable elm-trees, which divided the road from the haw-haw leading to the pleasure grounds. The entrance was through heavy iron gates, surmounted with grotesque figures cut in stone. The pleasure-grounds were profusely filled with flowering-shrubs, and a richer variety, formally planted in beds, than at Fairlawn-hall, of the most beautiful and rare flowers, grew with studied uniformity. The pensile branches of the golden laburnum, blending with the fragrant and colored lilac, together with the elegant balls of the gilder rose,

formed one interminable grove of overpowering fragrance, as she passed along the walk they bordered. There was a soft, reposing loveliness in this southern spot, which formed so great a contrast to the bold, wild beauties of the northern pleasure-grounds. But though she was charmed with the imposing novelty of the present scene, she, on the whole, preferred the romantic and rude features of that part of Lancashire where she lived.

CHAP. XXIII.

WHETHER it was the close, confined air of London, or the effect of the late shock Rebecca had sustained, which so materially injured her health, Mrs. Chesterville could not decide, but she daily saw an alarming change in her appearance. Her colour was entirely gone, and she became so extremely emaciated, Mrs. Chesterville determined to consult a physician, who immediately prescribed change of air, and that she ought to be taken without delay to Bristol hot-wells.

Mrs. Chesterville had already been absent from home longer than she intended, and she was distressed at the idea of either leaving Rebecca behind, or taking her to the bleak climate of the north, milder air having been strongly recommended. Mr. Mason kindly obviated all her difficulty, by proposing to

write to his friend Mr. Elton, a Turkey merchant, residing at Bristol ; and make enquiry whether Miss Russell could be boarded with some genteel family, for the benefit of milder air.

Mr. Thomas Elton, the gentleman he addressed in behalf of Rebecca, returned a speedy and satisfactory answer. He invited the young lady to his house until she could be established as a boarder in some respectable family, which he would seek out.

Rebecca, naturally timid, and cruelly depressed in spirits from her late misfortune, was quite distressed at the idea of parting from such precious friends as Mrs. Chesterville and her daughter. They had soothed her mind, and mitigated her late heavy affliction, by their tenderness and affection. It was a severe trial at the present time to take up her abode with strangers, and in a strange country ; she however endeavoured, unrepiningly, to submit to her lot, and had

sense and discernment to see the propriety of her removal from Liverpool, or its immediate neighbourhood, under existing circumstances.

Mr. Mason obligingly undertook to conduct her to his friend at Bristol — a kindness of which Rebecca was duly sensible.

The parting between the friends was tender and affecting. Rebecca was quite subdued — she attempted to speak, but the words died on her lips, and she could only inarticulately say, as she saluted Mrs. Chesterville, “Take with you, dearest Madam, my warmest gratitude, my everlasting love and respect.”

“Love, gratitude, and respect!” interrupted the lively Charlotte, attempting to smile through her tears, “What more have you to add, dear Rebecca?”

“Much, much more would I add,” she replied, “but —”

“But you are at a loss for words — well, as mamma guesses all you would

say, we will waive all except a few more salutations ;” affectionately embracing her, and then ran away.

Mrs. Chesterville had cherished Rebecca with so much fondness, and entertained so high an opinion of her excellence, the separation was very painful ; and after many tears being shed, they parted, with the assurance from Mrs. Chesterville, that Rebecca at all times should find a home with her, if she required one.

Mrs. Chesterville and her daughter proceeded into Lancashire, whilst Rebecca journeyed with Mr. Mason towards Bristol.

She endeavoured, from time to time, to enter into something like conversation with her friendly, good-humoured companion, who did all in his power to cheer her ; but Rebecca was sick at heart — she was separated, perhaps for ever, from the only persons who were dear to her in the world. The family of the Ches-

tervilles comprised her little world — she found how inadequate was wealth to purchase happiness ; and the sacrifice of those she loved, could ill repay her for the title of an heiress. Still she was destitute, though no longer portionless ; and, could she have exchanged her present for her former lot, how gladly would she have done so. In the little circle in which she formerly had lived, she was loved with fondness, and cherished with kindness. Now what a blank was before her — and at every lengthened mile, her spirits and courage seemed to fail.

CHAP. XXIV.

ON the evening of the third day, the travellers reached the city of Bristol.

When Rebecca was ushered into the house of strangers, she sensibly felt the loss of her kind friends. Naturally timid, she was abashed in the presence of the two ladies to whom Mr. Mason introduced her; there was something so dignified and superior in their appearance, to any thing she had ever seen before.

Mr. Elton politely met his guests at the door, and immediately conducted them into the apartment where his lady and daughter were seated. Lady Frances Elton immediately rose from her embroidery frame, and advanced to welcome Rebecca; whilst the young one, putting down the book she had been reading,

stood with looks of complacency, as she silently regarded Rebecca.

“Your countenance, young lady,” exclaimed her Ladyship, “is the herald of all that is intelligent and amiable; you require not a more favourable passport of introduction.”

Perhaps Rebecca had never looked more lovely than at the present moment. Her deep mourning gave an interest and pensive softness to her whole appearance. Her cheeks were tinged with a passing hectic colour, which gave an unusual brilliance to her large blue eyes, and the transparent fairness of her skin seemed to have received a dazzling whiteness, from coming in contrast with her sable garments. The silken ringlets of her blond hair had escaped from beneath her cap, partially shading her snowy forehead and neck.

If, thought Rebecca, you are sincere, how flattering is my reception, and how fortunate I am; at any rate, you seem

to be too polite to daunt a poor friendless stranger.

Miss Elton kindly pressed Rebecca's hand, and also bade her welcome. She was a lovely young woman, like her mother, elegant and dignified; but it was a dignity so tempered by softness, as to render her truly feminine, and Rebecca felt that she could have taken the captivating Constance Elton at once to her heart.

The surprise of all was mutual. Rebecca, without the refinement of Miss Elton, possessed with her native simplicity an inborn grace, which gave her character an easy guilelessness so prepossessing, as happily to advocate her cause with Lady Frances so greatly in her favour, she at once was inclined to retain her for her guest.

Mr. Elton, during his travels, had met with Lady Frances Maynard, who, struck with his handsome person and unaffected manners, fell in love with him; and the

impression he made on her youthful heart was returned by him with a warmth which led to their union.

Mr. Elton sprang from an ancient family, and was so wealthy, that though the daughter of a peer, her Ladyship's father being very poor, was not averse to marry his daughter to so desirable a person as Mr. Elton. They were a remarkably happy couple. One son and daughter blessed their union. The former was in partnership with his father, while the daughter proved the companion and joy of her mother. She had bestowed on her those elegant accomplishments with which she was gifted. Constance Elton had not only a knowledge of various languages, but she excelled in the sciences of music and painting, attainments few young ladies then acquired.

Rebecca's noble hostess and engaging daughter, appeared to her of a superior order of beings to any thing she had

seen before. She had always thought Mrs. Chesterville had a claim to be ranked as an elegant woman, but there was a stiffness, a formality, in all her words and actions, which now forcibly struck her, when compared with the unstudied grace of Lady Frances. She looked like a queen, so noble was her air, so full of courtesy her words and manner. Her voice was so sweet, so conciliating and persuasive, Rebecca hung upon every word she uttered, though she seemed to shrink into mortifying insignificance in the presence of so noble a lady. She was dressed in a peculiar style, altogether foreign from what she had seen before; but it was, though simple, remarkably becoming, and set off her person and face to great advantage. Miss Elton was habited in the same costume.

"Constance," cried her Ladyship, taking Rebecca's hand, and gracefully putting it within Miss Elton's, "do all

in your power to make Miss Russell consider herself at home, instead of regarding us as strangers. She has a claim to a kind reception from the introduction of your father's friend; and, I am persuaded, she will have a further one for her own sake, if I am not greatly mistaken."

Rebecca, at a loss how to reply, could only look her thanks, which glistened in her eyes with an expression of pleasure.

She remarked there was a degree of taste in the furniture of the apartment, and in all the ornamental parts, which had not the heavy clumsiness of the houses she was used to inhabit. Every thing was conducted by Lady Frances with a regard to elegance, but was so divested of cold ceremony as to set the company at ease, and diffuse a cheerfulness at once pleasing and unrestrained.

Mr. Elton, though, like Mr. Chester-ville and Mr. Mason, the complete man of business, was more polished in his man-

ners, and more conversant with general topics of conversation, from having travelled more than either of the other gentlemen.

Rebecca's reserve insensibly wore off, and, before the evening closed, she began to feel at home with her new friends.

The next morning, before taking leave, Mr. Mason proposed enquiring for some respectable family with whom Miss Russell could be placed.

Lady Frances interrupted him with a good humoured smile, and said, "I beg to negative the proposal, at least give Miss Russell a little time for repose, and a fair trial how she likes her new acquaintance."

"I am an excellent walker," cried Miss Elton, "and shall be happy, if Miss Russell can take exercise, to accompany her to the Hot Wells, which, Mr. Mason observed, are recommended. You will be delighted with the wild beauties with which Clifton abounds. Its wooded

rocks, its winding river, with a combination of objects to please the eye of taste and fancy. Few parts of England can boast a richer diversity of the sublime and beautiful on a circumscribed scale."

Rebecca replied, "Miss Elton could not afford her a higher enjoyment."

"I have travelled so much," continued Constance, "with my mother abroad, as to have acquired a sort of passion for all that is grand and lovely in nature. During the fine weather I almost live amidst St. Vincent's rocks, to the wonder and curiosity of the ladies in the neighbourhood, who, no doubt, set me down as a most extraordinary person."

"If you are fond of antiquity," she proceeded, "you shall accompany me to visit my uncle, the Abbot of St. Augustine.* The abbey is a venerable go-

* Bristol has been a bishopric ever since the dissolution of religious houses in the reign of Henry the Eighth. The present cathedral having been formerly the church of the Abbey of St. Augustine.

thic pile, solemn and monastic, worth your surveying."

What a field of information and knowledge was laid open to Rebecca. She regarded her new friends with admiration, and promised herself delight and improvement in their future society.

Mr. Mason took a kind leave of Rebecca, adding, "I leave you, dear Miss, in such good hands, it would be a pity to take you away, since my Lady is so condescending as to wish for your company."

Rebecca gratefully thanked Mr. Mason for having conducted her to Bristol; after his departure she sat down and wrote to her respected friend Mrs. Chesterville, to whom she gave a warm and flattering picture of Lady Frances and Miss Elton, whose superior attractions dazzled while they charmed her.

It was one of the exalted Abbeyes, its head sitting in Parliament as a spiritual lord, and exercising all episcopal offices.

CHAP. XXV.

IN the society of the sensible and well-bred, a very short acquaintance banishes restraint ; ease and courtesy excite confidence, and early beget friendship.

Rebecca, in the course of a week, felt herself a happy member of Mr. Elton's family. There was an innate delicacy and refinement in Miss Elton's character ; a softness, yet dignity in her manners, so prepossessing, that while Rebecca felt she commanded respect, she, at the same time, created esteem, and Miss Elton was only to be known to be beloved.

Her mind insensibly expanded, her judgment became more correct, and, though her taste was never fastidious, under the judicious eye of Lady Frances Elton, she had a high relish for those superior attainments she saw had reached

perfection in her Ladyship and Miss Elton.

Lady Frances's acquaintance with foreign courts had refined her natural taste, while it gave a playful vivacity to her conversation, which abounded in wit, but so corrected by good sense, that it could neither offend nor prove displeasing. Her manners were piquant and prepossessing; she had mixed in the most brilliant Court in Europe, that of Louis the Fourteenth; she had seen the simple, elegant La Valliere, the seducing Montespan; the wise, judicious, but subtle Maintenon. She had cognizance of them all; she had been presented to the most polished monarch Europe then boasted, the French king. She had also seen the gay Court of the gallant Charles, blazing with the charms of such a train of beauteous females, and where all the wits and poets of the day bore contested rivalry; it was quite a new era in poetry. Since the time of Shakspeare no drama-

tic writer had appeared to compare with Otway. The melting tenderness of his lines; the powerful dramatic interest which he gave to his plays, made way at once to the hearts of those gifted with taste to enjoy them. The lofty sublimity of Dryden equally astonished and charmed; while the terse wit of Butler drew forth laughter, and was a style so original and novel of composition, as to render him immortal, though, unhappily, neither he nor his cotemporary, Otway, were raised from penury by their fine talents.

What a source of knowledge and enjoyment was now unfolded to Rebecca from Lady Frances's and Miss Elton's acquaintance with these and other eminent authors. In reading them aloud, they pointed out their various beauties; for Rebecca, notwithstanding her particular taste for literature, had been hitherto deprived of the advantage of any commentator, Mr. Templeton holding in aversion

what he called a *bookish person*; and Mrs. Chesterville, though sensible and tolerably well informed on general topics, was too deeply immersed in the cares for her family, to give her time to reading.

Rebecca's time now was completely filled up in useful and elegant attainments; her health, from her removal into a milder climate, soft air, and gentle exercise, daily improved. Her eyes regained their wonted lustre; her cheeks, their roseate hue. Though her thoughts continually reverted to the former extraordinary occurrences of her eventful life, she was too sensible of her present blessings, not to recover her peace of mind. Of her romantic history her new friends were ignorant. She had simply been presented to them as Miss Russell, a ward of the late Mr. Templeton's, of Fairlawn-hall, and heiress to a considerable portion of his wealth.

Rebecca was naturally open-hearted, ingenuous, and communicative; but to

her new friends she was reserved—averse, from an innate delicacy of feeling, to unfold a tale seemingly so improbable and romantic; she always became abstracted and confused, when the subject led to any thing like an enquiry respecting her family and connections. Though not ashamed of her humble birth, she had a great repugnance to disclose her singular estrangement from her parents, and the *Predictions* of Sir Ambrose Templeton, as connected with the events of her future life.

CHAP. XXVI.

ABOUT a fortnight after Rebecca's sojourn at Bristol, she received the following letter from Charlotte Chesterville :—

“Liverpool, June 12, 16—.

DEAR REBECCA.—Mamma and I had a long, dull journey back to Lancashire. When we got home, the house appeared to have lost its pleasantest inmate in our sweet Rebecca. However, I give you joy, my dear, in safely being out of harm's way, where none of Sir Ambrose Templeton's spies can trace you ; for there has been a great hue and cry after you throughout the country. The mad knight has been here, storming at poor dear papa, and demanding where he has placed you. Luckily, papa is ignorant ; for mamma is resolved to keep the

secret, that you may not be persecuted ; but he declares that neither earth nor sea can or shall separate you from him, for the magic ring is a certain talisman, that finally will bring you together.

“ You give us a bewitching picture of your new friends ; so much so, that I am afraid you will cast your mad-cap Charlotte aside for the all-accomplished and elegant Miss Elton. In truth, Rebecca, I must appear quite an ignoramus, compared with such a refined young lady. We, commercial people, look more to the main chance, than to the beauties of the mind ; wealth is the god of our idolatry, and to that shrine we too readily bow — considering that money alone produces all the good things of life, and, without moralizing, may I not add all the evil.

“ Mamma and Juliet (who is with us), send you love and kisses.

“ Your affectionate mad-cap Friend,

“ CHARLOTTE CHESTERVILLE.”

On perusing Charlotte's letter, she turned pale with alarm at the part relating to Sir Ambrose Templeton's determined pursuit, and prediction. She sat lost in thought, insensible of the presence of Lady Frances and Miss Elton, who were anxiously regarding her.

Rebecca's confusion increased ; and she took the first moment to leave the room, requesting their excuse, not feeling very well, till dinner time.

"Miss Russell," Lady Frances said, "is an interesting and lovely young creature ; but, considering her extreme youth, and apparent simplicity of character, there is a closeness and reserve about her that is unnatural. It is uncommon for a person of sensibility and tenderness never to speak of her parents or connections. She has not, it is true, the commanding air that belongs to high birth, neither does she possess the mean insignificance of one of low degree. Has

she ever, Constance, talked to you of her family?"

"Never; though I confess, with a little natural female curiosity, I have sometimes endeavoured to lead to the subject; but Miss Russell has always cautiously waved it. The only persons she names are Mrs. and Miss Chesterville, the people who were on a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Mason. With them, I understood, she has passed much of her time."

"My having admitted," replied her Ladyship, "a stranger guest into my house is, perhaps, rather incautious; but Mr. Elton, happy to oblige Mr. Mason, proposed inviting the young lady hither; and there is something in Miss Russell's countenance, and unsophisticated manners, so prepossessing, I have been irresistibly impelled to retain her; though, certainly, she daily has proposed departing, when a proper asylum is found."

"You, too, my dear," continued the

Lady, "seem to be so partial to Miss Russell, I should be sorry to separate you ; without," she added, " it is really her wish to leave us."

" That, I am sure," returned Miss Elton, warmly, " is not the case." Miss Russell has always expressed herself happy in being here."

The conversation dropped.

Rebecca, now alone, again perused Charlotte's letter. " Am I never," she mentally exclaimed, " to find a resting-place ? and when most happy, by some unforeseen calamity, to be driven from the few friends I possess ?"

She seriously dwelt on the necessity there appeared for her removal ; and determined to summon resolution to name the painful subject to the family.

Pale, dejected, her eyes swollen with weeping, Rebecca made her appearance at table. Lady Frances and her daughter perceived that she was unhappy, and had been in tears. With the utmost kind-

ness they addressed and regarded her, but without asking any questions.

Mr. Elton, also, was struck with her pallid looks ; and said, with a good-humoured smile, " You will spoil your pretty face, my dear Miss Russell, if you shed so many tears, and do no credit to our fine Bristol air. I hope you feel at home with us. I am sure my wife and daughter wish you to be so."

Rebecca, quite subdued by Mr. Elton's kindness, burst into tears. " Indeed, Sir," she exclaimed, " you are all kindness ; it quite overpowers me."

" Something has affected your spirits, dear Miss Russell," interrupted Lady Frances. " Be on no ceremony, but retire with my daughter. Submit your griefs to Constance ; you will find her worthy your friendship."

Miss Elton silently led Rebecca from table, and proposed a turn in the air.

" I think it will revive me," Rebecca

faintly replied, " nor shall you find me, Miss Elton, unworthy your kindness."

They proceeded to a sequestered shady spot in one of the green recesses on the banks of the Avon, where they seated themselves. Rebecca took her friend's hand, and pressing it with fervour, exclaimed, " You see me, Miss Elton, an heiress, it is true ; but at the same time you see me almost friendless, destitute of a home, relations, and the unfortunate victim of a magical delusion, which has partially tinctured all my days with sorrow."

" To a candid mind," she continued, as Miss Elton with earnest curiosity regarded her, " reserve is most oppressive. Yet I felt that I had no right to intrude the history of my eventful life on strangers ; but your amiable mother has shown so much feeling, with so much delicacy, so much kindness, with so much liberality, that I shall be more at ease when I have committed my tale to

Lady Frances and your confidence; secure, that in your generous bosoms I shall find sympathy."

Miss Elton assured her of their continued friendship.

Rebecca now gave a brief narrative of the occurrences of her life. Constance viewed her with interest and wonder. When she had ended, Miss Elton tenderly embracing her, exclaimed, "Your trials have been severe, dear Rebecca; but you have borne them with such fortitude and resignation, you will secure the friendship and esteem of my mother; for already you have made an advocate in her bosom by your humility and sweetness."

Rebecca found her spirits revive, for her mind was more at ease after the confidence she had reposed in Miss Elton.

She now proposed returning home, and on reaching Bristol went immediately to her own chamber, leaving her

new friend to relate to Lady Frances the history of her life.

Lady Frances, generous, noble, feeling, and humane, greatly commiserated the trying situations in which Rebecca had been placed, giving her great credit for her prudence and forbearance.

—When she again joined them, Lady Frances, in the most delicate and graceful manner, renewed her invitation, as if she and Miss Elton would be the persons obliged by her remaining, adding, “Constance has found in you, dear Miss Russell, a friend so congenial to her heart, it really would be cruel in you to leave us. Write, however, to Mr. Chesterville, under whose guardianship my husband tells me you are, for permission to prolong your visit.”

Rebecca’s eyes overflowed with pleasure at a request so gratifying. She immediately dispatched a letter to Mrs. Chesterville, who lost no time in sending a reply favourable to her wishes.

CHAP. XXVII.

THE remainder of the summer, and the succeeding winter months, glided on with Rebecca in one uninterrupted scene of happiness and enjoyment. Miss Elton and she seemed like two twin sisters; their pleasures, their pursuits, their habits became the same; and from their congeniality of mind and taste, their friendship proved as tender as it became permanent.

“ ——— Like two artificial gods,
Created with needles both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion;
Both warbling of one song, both in one key;
As if their hands, sides, voices, and minds
Had been incorporate. So they grew together
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
But yet an union in partition.
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem;
Or with two seeming bodies but one heart;
Two of the first like coats in heraldry,
Due but to one as crowned with one crest.”

Midsummer Night's Dream.

But short-lived is all human bliss ! To be for ever pure and unalloyed, is not permitted in a world which is not an abiding city. Like an April day's clouds and sunshine, cheerful and overcast, alternately gilding one day with enjoyment, the next overshadowed by sorrow.

In a moment, the brightest ornament of Mr. Elton's house was taken from them, and one of the happiest families desolated. Lady Frances Elton was removed by sudden death to that blessed region for which, from her exemplary piety, she had long been prepared.

The event came like a thunderbolt to crush and destroy them, so unprepared were they all for a calamity so heavy. The tender, the suffering daughter required all the consolation that was administered by her uncle, the Abbot of St. Augustine's, to soothe her mind, and teach her resignation.

Rebecca was as deeply afflicted as her friend, for she loved and revered Lady

Frances Elton with the affection of a daughter. The younger Mr. Elton felt his loss as heavily as his sister, but he had more command over his passions, and more effectually concealed his grief for the sake of his father, whose silent sorrow so materially injured his health, as to endanger his life.

During this mournful season, they all derived comfort from the frequent visits of Mr. Elton's brother, the Abbot of St. Augustine's. He was a man of reputed learning and piety, as his meek and benignant countenance bore testimony. There was a heavenly serenity in his beaming eye, and his noble open brow expressed the capaciousness of a mind at peace with all the world.

It was during one of his late visits, after time had somewhat ameliorated their grief, a young man accompanied him to his brother's, the son of a friend, for whom the Abbot entertained the warmest friendship.

“ I have brought, Thomas,” he said to his nephew, “ Captain Berry hither as an acquaintance worthy your cultivating; he has lately greatly distinguished himself by his valour and spirit. My sequestered and religious habits of life exclude me from the world; but you cannot please me more than by showing my friend’s son every right of hospitality and kindness. He is now on his return from an expedition into France, and stopt at Bristol by the desire of his father, Sir Robert Berry, on purpose to enquire for me.”

Young Elton graciously received Captain Berry, and by the elder Mr. Elton he was immediately invited to make his house his home during the few days he meant to pass in Bristol.

Berry was in the prime of life, with a figure tall, elegant, and commanding, such as became a young soldier. His face was open, ingenuous, and intelligent; his eyes full of fire and animation, with

a complexion, though dark, florid with health and severe service. His understanding was excellent, and had been cultivated as highly as was then the fashion of his day. His reputation stood high in the army for courage, as well as humanity. His father, Sir Robert Berry, held an ancient baronetage, but his estates had suffered so considerably from the turbulence of the times, he allowed his son, who was spirited and ambitious of military fame, to enter the army.

Young Elton, open-hearted, friendly and good humoured, soon became much pleased with Captain Berry; there was an air of gallantry, high polish, and an acquaintance with the world, which rendered his conversation interesting and agreeable to a young man, who, like Elton, had always been so closely confined to his father's house of business, few opportunities had offered of cultivating the acquaintance of men of his own age; and, indeed, the domestic cir-

cle of his own fireside was so happy, so uniformly cheerful, that Thomas, when once seated in the midst of their social party, never had a desire to go further in search of enjoyment.

To the beauty and gentle sweetness of Rebecca he was not insensible ; but the esteem she excited was that of a brother. He admired her extreme loveliness, but it was without enthusiasm ; and he estimated her excellence, knowing that her virtues were regarded as they merited by his lamented mother and sister. Her company had enlivened their little domestic society. He was pleased to remark the growing friendship between his sister and Rebecca ; and, under their present calamity, it greatly mitigated the affliction of Constance to possess so estimable a friend.

At this period, Captain Berry's arrival was a great relief, as it broke the painful monotony of their now desolate house. The elder Mr. Elton visibly declined ;

and the effort he made to conceal from his family that his heart was broken, preyed on his constitution, and was rapidly hurrying him to the grave.

CHAP. XXVIII.

DOMESTICATED in Mr. Elton's family, Captain Berry soon became captive to the charms of the fair Rebecca. Though Constance was scarcely less lovely than her friend, yet, in the genuine simplicity of Rebecca, there was something more attaching. The lofty superiority of Miss Elton, though tempered by a graceful mildness, led not the way so easily to the heart, and conveyed an idea of coldness and caution which too generally belong to persons accustomed to the usage of the world.

The soft effulgence of Rebecca's eyes, half curtained by her long, silken eyelashes, gave a pensive Madona expression to her features, which, without being strictly regular, were so happy in their formation, an artist would not have wish-

ed them altered ; her mind beamed in her face, and what she felt and thought was there depicted.

Captain Berry hung over her, enamoured, as she sang to her lute a tender, serious strain, not unlike one of the evening hymns to the Virgin : the words were composed by the abbot of St. Augustine. The sensibility which she displayed throughout the air, touched him to the soul ; and, almost forgetting Rebecca was a terrestrial being, he rapturously exclaimed, as he attempted to take her hand, I would say—

“ That strain again ;
O, it came o’er my ear like the sweet south,
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour.”

Twelfth Night.

Rebecca coloured, and silently withdrew her hand. It was the first compliment she had ever received from Captain Berry, indeed from almost any man, for young Elton was not given to flattery ;

and though he thought Rebecca a very lovely girl, his regard for her was that of a brother. Rebecca's heart fluttered, as her timid eyes met the ardent gaze of Berry ; a crimson glow covered her face and bosom, as she stammered out her inability to repeat the air, which was of an affecting nature, for the words spoke of departed spirits of the righteous, and she thought of the pure one of Lady Frances, which so lately had diffused joy to all around her.

Miss Elton was also affected, but she had more command over her feelings than Rebecca, and checked the rising tear.

To somewhat dissipate the present embarrassment of the lovers, Miss Elton opened a *porte-feuille*, containing some exquisite drawings of the scenery around Clifton, which Berry carelessly turned over, and soon after he took leave, with a promise to see the ladies on the following day.

Constance observed with anxiety the

admiration which Rebecca had inspired. Though there was every thing in Captain Berry's appearance and manner to engage affection, the hazard attached to a soldier's life was not likely to tend ultimately to the happiness of either ; and Rebecca's retired habits rather shunned than sought publicity.

She was reluctant to give her pain by warning of her danger ; whilst Rebecca, who on all former occasions sought Miss Elton's confidence, now sedulously avoided all subjects that could lead to the name of Berry. Sleep fled her eyes when she retired to her pillow. Captain Berry had won upon her youthful heart, and she retraced his look, his manner, his conversation, with partial fondness.

He was more enlightened than most young men of the age in which he lived. The abbot had spent much time in his father's house, and had taken great pleasure in instructing him in those various branches of knowledge, which rendered

his conversation delightful to Miss Elton and Rebecca. He was fond of music and poetry to enthusiasm, and had cultivated his taste for each at every favourable opportunity,

When Rebecca the following morning opened the book which contained the air she had sung on the former evening, she was surprised to find the following lines from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, written in a pencil beneath : —

“ The angel ended, and in mine ear
So charming left her voice, that I awhile
Thought her still speaking.”

It was easy for Rebecca to penetrate what were the sentiments of Captain Berry towards her. She readily gave him that heart he had quite subdued, and each day brought added felicity in the society of one another.

Berry, spell-bound, heeded not the lapse of time, till roused by the question from the venerable abbot, if it was not

encroaching on the hospitality of his kind brother by a stay so prolonged without any particular motive?

Berry at once opened his heart to the holy man, and solicited his interest with Mr. Elton in behalf of Rebecca.

His affection was pure and disinterested. He was ignorant that she was an heiress. His own possessions were not large: but as he was heir to a baronetage, they would be hereafter considerable: and even if Miss Russell was personless, how slender was that objection when put in competition with his happiness.

The abbot heard him with a look of stern rebuke.

"Silly boy," he exclaimed, in a tone of gravity, not very encouraging, "honour and arms should rather be a soldier's theme than that of love: the camp his home: the knapsack his pillow of repose. There are not times to think on tender ditties — when your country is

so beset, and hourly you may be called to your post of duty. Then what becomes of the fair Rebecca, who, if you marry, so delicate and tender, is not formed to follow you through difficulty and danger, when the cannon's roar sounds in her ear, and, amidst the dead and dying, she, with a woman's tenderness, feebly follows you to the scene of war, think well what then will be your anguish, as you strain her to that fond bosom, perhaps to meet no more?"

"Oh, horrible!" cried Berry, with dismay, "the picture you have drawn; rather reverse it, if you would not destroy me quite; and paint those hours of bliss, which, in some sequestered nook, we may pass together, if I may but call Rebecca mine."

"Your attachment has not reason for its basis; 'tis a romantic passion, a youthful folly, which reflection will cool, without it is founded on ambition."

"On ambition!" he interrupted warm-

ly, " my love is founded ; the proud ambition to possess Rebecca. If she be portionless I care not, so she is content to share a soldier's fortune. 'Tis sympathy of soul, 'tis kindred minds, that form the only basis of true happiness."

"Your's," said the abbot, " is the sophistry of inexperience, therefore futile. I object not to your choice, for Rebecca is lovely, virtuous, and wise—discreet, passing her tender years. Neither do I object to that lawful state of holy matrimony ordained by God ; but it is your childish years. Go then, until experience gives you wisdom, and pursue that life of hostile warfare allotted for you which scatters sorrow and desolation over the earth. It is man that brings strife ; and, brief as are his days, he cannot be at peace till the grave receives him."

The conversation was here interrupted by one of Mr. Elton's servants, whose countenance bespoke his sorrowful er-

rand. His master for some days had been rapidly declining, and now became so much worse, Mr. Elton desired the immediate attendance of his brother to close his eyes.

“ I am called,” said the abbot, with a look of meek resignation, “ to fulfil the last and mournful office humanity requires. You, young man,” he continued, in an impressive voice, “ are only beginning your career in life ; may its end be like my brother’s, and you need not fear death. God protect and guide you,” extending his arms in benediction.

“ May I not, reverend father,” exclaimed Berry, “ await your return ? I fain would know how poor Rebecca—”

“ Chide that impetuosity of temper — learn patience and forbearance. Go home now to your father, and rest satisfied that, at a proper season, you shall hear from me. Farewell !”

Thus repulsed, Berry dared not follow. Listless and unhappy, he mounted his

horse, and directed his way towards his paternal home in Leicestershire, pursued by the fair form of Rebecca, to whom there now seemed little prospect of being united.

CHAP. XXIX.

THE abbot found Mr. Elton, though visibly approaching his end, sensible and resigned. He was surrounded by his family, who, in the deepest anguish, were listening with respectful silence to the last words which, in feeble accents, flowed from his dying lips.

Every consolation that could be offered on the awful occasion, the abbot poured into the bosom of his brother, elevating the thoughts of his afflicted family to scenes beyond this terrestrial sphere.

Before morning, Mr. Elton's earthly pilgrimage was ended. He expired on the breast of his pious brother.

Constance Elton, since the death of Lady Frances, spent much of her time in a society of reformed nuns, living in the vicinity of Bristol. Their meek de-

votion, sequestered habits, and grave demeanour, suited the pensiveness which gained upon Miss Elton ever since she was deprived of her mother. Fondly as she loved Rebecca, yet the imposing and insidious manners of the sisterhood gradually weaned Miss Elton from the pleasures of the world ; she regarded its enjoyments as empty and vain gratifications ; and growing daily more attached to their religious ceremonies, immediately after the interment of her father, she formed the determination to enter the community.

Rebecca was quite distressed when Miss Elton acquainted her with her intention. To part from her only friend at the present period, seemed to deprive her of every joy in existence, and was so heavy an affliction, she would have accompanied Constance into the convent, had not her heart been devoted to Captain Berry ; hence a monastic life was one the least suited to her inclination.

It was true, the suddenness of his departure, without any reason given, would have wounded her deeply, had not the circumstance of Mr. Elton's illness at the time impeded all intercourse, or even the opportunity of a tender farewell. She therefore fondly indulged the hope they soon should meet again. The prospect was too pleasing not to cherish. A thousand nameless attentions had convinced Rebecca that she was not indifferent to him; and though the rules of decorum and modesty forbade her remaining alone with young Elton in the now desolate mansion of his lamented parents, yet her heart sickened at the idea of a convent, which would fatally prove an eternal barrier between her and Berry.

Miss Elton saw and pitied Rebecca's distress; she was too liberal minded to persuade her to adopt that mode of life which had become her own choice, and kindly said, with delicacy and kindness,

“ You must, dear Rebecca, prove a sister to Thomas in my absence. He regards and respects you as such. It would be cruel to deprive him of you also ; therefore, to obviate all impropriety in your remaining here, a widowed sister of my father’s will take my place ; she is a worthy woman, and will study both your comforts.

“ Though I am going, in some measure, to detach myself from the world, my friendship for you will remain unaltered. At stated seasons we can always meet, but I have a higher calling than worldly pursuits, and even my sister, Rebecca, cannot detain me from it ; for, oh ! how weak are all earthly considerations, when compared to being the child of God ?”

Constance, collected, steady, and persevering, took leave of Rebecca with a calmness that showed her purpose was fixed. Rebecca, young, ardent in feeling, warm in affection, was quite sub-

duced by the various emotions which overwhelmed her ; she clasped Constance with tenderness to her heart, and, shedding floods of tears, was unable, from sobs, to articulate a sentence.

During her residence with Lady Frances Elton and her daughter, Rebecca had experienced every enjoyment their friendship and refinement could bestow. There was an elegance belonging to Lady Frances ; a correctness of taste and judgment ; a dignity, so tempered with softness, in all her actions, that, while Rebecca felt her loss irreparable, she held her up in her " mind's eye " as the brightest pattern of every female excellence. In Miss Elton she had found a friend of congenial mind, with whom she had shared the happiest hours of her life ; their pursuits, their occupations, had been the same ; and brief as were the months they had spent together, from Lady Frances and her daughter, Rebecca had acquired more knowledge in every

useful and elegant acquirement, than in the four years spent at Liverpool.

She wrote Mrs. Chesterville an account of the calamity which had befallen her. Rebecca endeavoured to acquire composure to receive her new inmate Mrs. Morgan, who was to supply the place of her lost friend.

Mr. Elton's behaviour to Rebecca had never been marked by any particular attention, though uniformly friendly and obliging; now, by every kindness, he seemed to try to make up to her the loss of Miss Elton; he desired her to consider herself as his younger sister, to think herself at home, to command whatever she wished in his house, to feel no restraint, for it was not more his inclination, than he deemed it his duty, to supply to her the place of those inestimable parents of which it had been the will of the Almighty to deprive him.

"Let us, dear Rebecca," he added with emotion, "set them always before

our eyes; follow their example, precepts, and actions; imitate their virtues, and so live as if they saw and approved our deeds, and then we cannot greatly err." He took her hand, and, pressing it tenderly, continued, "Henceforth look on me as, indeed, your brother; your friend, your adviser on all occasions. I have never been indifferent to your interests, to your happiness." He paused, and, colouring, proceeded, "If, Rebecca, it is in my power by any means to promote that happiness, scruple not to claim my confidence, my services."

After some hesitation he proceeded, "I am not ignorant there is one not unworthy Rebecca's affections."

She coloured, and, in confusion, timidly looked down, and remained silent. "Had your heart been free," Mr. Elton exclaimed with increased emotion, "perhaps Rebecca would have looked with an eye of favour on the brother of her friend Constance. As it is," he added,

“ I ask not, I presume not — all I solicit, amiable, gentle Rebecca, is that you will regard me as one warmly inclined to promote your happiness, however unhappy myself.”

Rebecca could not speak, she was surprised, overwhelmed ; and, whilst her eyes beamed with looks of ineffable sweetness on Mr. Elton, he suddenly left the room overcome by contending emotions.

It was not his intention to have revealed to Rebecca the tender passion which she had inspired in his bosom. Indeed, he was scarcely sensible, that she had inspired a sentiment of the kind, until Captain Berry became their daily guest ; then, and then only, the truth became revealed. A listlessness, a jealousy, for which he could not account, took possession of him. Berry's attentions to Rebecca, he beheld with the most painful emotion ; he was uneasy in their presence, and often withdrew to chide himself for indulging a hopeless passion ;

but the more he strove to subdue his feelings, the greater the ascendancy they seemed to gain. To give way to a partiality likely to prove so fatal to his repose, he resolved to conquer, and, by a powerful effort, nobly offer his interest in promoting an alliance with his more fortunate rival. He saw that Miss Russell's heart was devoted to Berry; he read it in her bright intelligent eyes; he read it in the timid confusion which came over her, which spread in blushing smiles whenever Captain Berry was named, or came into her presence.

He had openly declared to him the admiration Rebecca had excited; he had, in confidence, avowed his passion, and young Elton was convinced nothing, except his father's fatal illness, had prevented Berry making proposals to Miss Russell, when he was so suddenly shut out from all intercourse with them by the death of the elder Mr. Elton.

Thomas Elton was a grave, sensible,

steady young man ; his education had been confined to that which was suited to a mercantile life ; he had not a particle of romance in his disposition ; his temper was even ; his heart warm and generous. It was Rebecca's excellence, not her beauty, which, by degrees, had established the affection she inspired ; he knew how tenderly she had been loved by his mother, and that Rebecca, in return, looked up to Lady Frances with a degree of veneration and filial regard, tinged with the enthusiasm of a young and ardent mind. His mother's opinions were the rule of her conduct ; her example the model of her life. To displease Lady Frances, by the slightest intended error, would have rendered her miserable ; to possess and deserve her favour and esteem was her highest ambition.

Young Elton lamented that his sister had been led away from his family and home, by what he considered the most

erroneous and misguided opinions. He respected his uncle, the abbot, but he pitied his bigotry and fanaticism and prejudices, though, from his genuine piety, he knew him to be sincere, if in error. He grieved that his influence over Constance had alienated her affections from her family, had detached her from the world, and withdrawn her from his domestic circle. Perceiving, or fancying that he perceived, his niece's scheme of life fixed in joining the sisterhood, the abbot, zealous in the cause of what he considered her eternal welfare, got her elected prioress in the place of the former principal, just dead, thus establishing Constance in the community.

Young Elton used all his influence and exertion to oppose a measure he entirely disapproved. It was unavailing. Constance's resolution remained unshaken; and, upheld by her uncle, every argument proved futile and unavailing.

Mrs. Morgan could ill supply to Re-

becca the loss of her friends. She missed the elegance which formerly had so eminently distinguished their house above every other in that part of the country. The books she formerly had read with Lady Frances and Miss Elton were cast aside ; she could not open them, they recalled so many tender and mournful recollections. Mrs. Morgan had no taste for reading ; Mr. Elton had not leisure. Music no longer sounded in the pavilion, the pencil no longer gave colouring, life, and beauty to the romantic landscapes with which St. Vincent's rocks abounded. She had no objects now to create excitement ; she had, alas ! which was more painful, no persons now on whom to rest her affection, to exchange looks of tenderness, to give the meed of approbation. Cheerful, animated conversation had ceased to charm the ear and the senses. Thought no longer met thought. The chair her beloved benefactress had filled so gracefully, with

looks of benignant sweetness, was vacated. Constance's tambour-frame hung useless; her lute was silent. All was still, desolate, and solitary! Rebecca could not bear to occupy the apartment; she fled from it with a feeling of despair; it was the tomb of her departed joys;—she looked around on vacancy; she burst into tears, and determined never more to enter that room, where every scene of happiness was departed for ever.

CHAP. XXX.

REBECCA now spent much of her time amidst the woody recesses of St. Vincent's rocks. The pensile beauty of the scene seemed to soothe the sadness of her heart. The soft murmuring of the Avon, as it glided at the foot of the impending cliffs, blending their fantastic forms with the rich, bright verdure of the trees; the roots of wild and fragrant flowers enamelling the banks; the tender, soft plaint of the stock-dove, and the more lively notes of myriads of birds, pouring forth their songs of gladness, were all objects and melodies which peculiarly harmonised with the melancholy tone of her spirits. She was glad to fly from the "busy hum of men," and in loneliness to indulge in that dangerous despondence

which seems to shut out all hope and all enjoyment.

Rebecca dwelt on the romantic events of her extraordinary life, from the period of her earliest recollection to the present moment. How much had she been the child of Providence — how much its peculiar care, under all the difficulties and dangers which she had encountered. Her residence with Sir Ambrose Templeton, when reason first began to dawn in infancy; next, her rescue from a watery grave by the humane Michael Barton, and the tender care of his wife Margery, bestowed upon her while fostered beneath their lowly dwelling; next their melancholy death; and her sudden surprising transition from poverty to affluence, in the mansion of her respected benefactor, Mr. Templeton; the interruption of their union by his brother, at the very moment it was to take place; the extraordinary fate predicted by Sir Am-

brose ; the spell which he affirmed bound them together, which, though she feared not, (considering it impossible) yet she shuddered to think upon, if indeed it were to be fulfilled, and she was to be united to a man who built his faith on *destiny*, not God. Yet still, such is the inconsistency of human nature, Rebecca, though she feared Sir Ambrose Templeton, disliked him not ; for he had cherished her with fondness in infancy ; she hung about him with a daughter's love ; when she could but lisp the name of father — but with that name was linked all tenderness. Still a cloud of mystery she could not penetrate, hung over all that was connected with Sir Ambrose Templeton ; and while she could not hate, she yet dreaded him.

To the amiable Mrs. Chesterville she owed the advantages of her youthful education. She had passed the latter years of childhood in heedless playfulness with her daughters, Juliet and

Charlotte, when free from care and sorrow; and she thought of them with fondness.

When her marriage was prevented with Mr. Templeton by the wild phrenzy of his brother, and the amulet, together with the magic ring, plunged into the Mersey, with the pledge affixed, that should she ever find that fatal ring, he then, and only then should claim her his, and thus seal her destiny for life, Rebecca turned sick at heart as the idea crossed her, impossible as it appeared such a destiny would ever be fulfilled.

Next she dwelt on the generosity of her noble benefactor, her betrothed husband, Mr. Templeton, for whom she entertained the deepest gratitude, the purest esteem. She was not, however, sorry she was free. It was an alliance founded on gratitude alone; and though she would have fulfilled the duties of a wife, with every effort to render Mr.

Templeton happy, she then knew not what it was to love.

Removed from Lancashire to avoid Sir Ambrose Templeton, how felicitous had been her days. Since her residence at Bristol, how fraught with peace, with love, and harmony.

There Captain Berry had won her youthful heart, yet was he not worthy the possession? Whatever might be her future lot, and whether or not they were destined to come together, she lamented not the conquest he had gained.

Rebecca frequently visited the prioress. Constance always met her with looks of placid happiness; and though she spoke not of their former days of gay enjoyment, yet she pressed Rebecca with fondness to her heart, and gave her the assurance her friendship and affection was undiminished.

Rebecca saw Mr. Elton only at the hour of meals, and sometimes of an evening. The look of tender enquiry

which he always viewed her gave
ain; and therefore, as much as
le, she shunned his society. Mrs.
an, engaged in domestic cares,
heeded Rebecca, who, left almost
ntly to herself, began to turn her
hts to some occupation which
call her mind from those mourn-
collections which still too power-
pressed upon her.

CHAP. XXXI.

SOME months had elapsed since the death of the elder Mr. Elton, and Constance's removal to the convent, when Rebecca was suddenly and unexpectedly roused from the painful torpor which preyed upon her by the arrival of the following letter : —

“ To Miss Russell.

“ Madam, — Might I flatter myself that a visit from me would not prove displeasing, on the wings of love I would instantly fly, and throw myself at your feet, offering a heart which long has been your's. It is not an heiress I seek in Miss Russell — it is a friend — a companion — a sweet solace in age, after the vicissitudes and perils incidental to a military life.

“ My fortune is sufficiently ample to satisfy the station I fill ; a profusion of wealth leads only to vain indulgences and ostentatious pleasures. A certain portion is perhaps requisite to comfort — beyond that, how little does it ultimately tend to happiness ; for wealth cannot bring health, nor can it heal a broken heart.

“ Suffer me, lovely Rebecca, to look forward to that felicity which, without you, I cannot taste ; and with that winning sweetness which bespeaks the purity and gentleness of your heart, admit to your presence the most devoted of your servants,

“ JOHN BERRY.”

The throbbing tumult of Rebecca's heart for some time prevented her taking up her pen ; at length she answered Sir John Berry to this effect :—

“ The visit from Sir John Berry cannot

prove displeasing to Rebecca : she is too much flattered by his partiality to negative his wishes."

Rebecca acted solely by the dictates of her own feelings in the reply she gave her lover. Though she would gladly have consulted Constance on an occasion so important to her future happiness, her total exemption from all worldly concerns had of late thrown a restraint over Rebecca, which in former days did not exist, when familiar confidence blended with the warmth of their friendship ; and she now shrank from the idea of informing her of the unadvised step she had taken, and determined to leave the disclosure of her intended union to be made by Sir John Berry to the abbot, and thence communicated to Constance.

Berry, of a warm and ardent disposition, was transported at the ready and cheerful consent given by Rebecca to become his. Folding and putting her

letter in his bosom, he instantly set out for Bristol, and stopped not until he alighted in that city.

Rebecca, whose sedate deportment was seldom altered by passing circumstances, now, however, assumed so changed an aspect, as to be observed by young Elton's ever quick and watchful eye ; when every time the door opened, Rebecca turned pale, trembled, then became crimson.

All attempt at conversation was fruitless. At length young Elton, with a half smile and suppressed sigh, tenderly regarding Rebecca, said, "I perceive, Rebecca, you are on the tiptoe of expectation. Love lights up those tender eyes with fond anxiety ; therefore think not to play the hypocrite with me — you cannot do it. Truth beams in that face, guides every motion of your heart, and you need not tell me that Sir John Berry is expected."

“It is even so,” she faintly exclaimed, her face suffused with blushes.

“Then why, lovely, and too fondly loved Rebecca, conceal it from me? Let us welcome him as becomes an expected bridegroom, with smiles of joy.

“From my soul I wish you happy,” he continued, sighing heavily, “and you will be happy. Sir John Berry is brave, generous, humane! He combines with all the intrepidity of the soldier, the proper feelings of a man—he is deserving of Rebecca.”

Such meed of praise from his rival touched her deeply. There was a sentiment so noble and liberal in this tribute of esteem, she insensibly took his hand, and pressed it in cordial friendship.

A violent ring at the gate broke off the conversation. In a few minutes Sir John Berry was announced. He entered the room in hurry and agitation, and, without observing young Elton, rushed into Rebecca's arms.

"Our good friend," said Rebecca, in a faltering accent, "would bid you welcome," regarding Elton.

He now advanced towards Sir John, and held out his hand, which trembled like an aspen-leaf, and the greetings which he attempted to offer died on his lips.

Berry, too full of happiness to remark young Elton, had flown to Rebecca in a transport of delight, and threw himself at her feet, exclaiming, "Thus prostrate before you, sweetest Rebecca, suffer me to pour forth my thanks, my gratitude — to tell you that my heart, too full for utterance, cannot express its joy. Thus, then," he continued, taking her willing hand, and pressing it with fervour to his lips, "suffer the happiest of men to worship, to adore thee."

"Rise, Sir John Berry," she replied, with modest dignity, "make me not the idol of thy worship. I am a weak, unsophisticated creature. Yet, if truth and

candour be any recommendation, then, in truth, believe that you possess my undivided affection ; and in selecting me as the object of your choice, I am not insensible of the honour you confer upon me."

Young Elton, previous to Rebecca's declaration, had glided out of the room ; and when Sir John Berry rose to address him, he was fled.

Berry forgot for the moment, in the bright sunshine of his happiness, or endeavoured to forget, how soon it was likely to be clouded by the pain of separation. Little more time was given him than to call Rebecca his, ere he must return to the seat of war ; no sooner fold her to his heart, call her by the endearing, the precious name of wife, ere they must be separated for ever. He chaced the terrible idea from his mind, as he fondly pressed her fair hand to his lips, and earnestly entreated her not to delay their nuptials ; but he would not pain her by

hinting that, by delay, he might leave her for ever.

Rebecca, having once consented to give her hand to Berry, was above all female affectation; and though delicate in feeling as in sentiment, she scorned keeping him in suspense, when he warmly pleaded for an early day.

“Suffer me, sweetest Rebecca,” he said earnestly, “to go immediately to Abbot Lawrence, and request him to unite us; he is not ignorant of the state of my heart. Indeed, he discovered it before I was sensible myself, how entirely my future happiness depended on your favour and reciprocal affection. The rigid abbot of St. Augustine scarcely gives his sanction to the rites of matrimony; therefore it was not without much severity he chid me, when he perceived that Miss Russell had made an impression which few men could withstand, where so many graces combine to take the heart by surprise.”

“Now,” he proceeded, “that the

issue proves happy beyond my fondest expectation, I am bound to confide in, to consult the abbot; he was my late father's friend; his consent will not be withheld, though, no doubt, according to his creed, he would rather make you the spouse of God than of man, yet finding you have made your election, and your friend Constance failed also in her power of conversion, he will not refuse his benediction, nor the office of joining our hands."

"If such," replied Rebecca, "is your opinion, I have no excuse to offer for delay. In truth, I wish for none. Perfect happiness is so rare an attainment, that to wantonly throw it from us, when within our reach, were surely to be unworthy a possession which cannot be estimated too highly, nor accepted but with gratitude and humility from the wise Disposer of all human events. My life, short as it hitherto has been, has yet been too chequered to refuse the good,

while in my power; and, oh! may I take it with thankfulness, for the felicity now promised, opens with the hope of years of bliss beyond the common lot of humanity."

"Excellent Rebecca — good, wise, so exalted, yet so humble! lovely in mind as in person, how shall I sufficiently speak my admiration?"

"Will you not," he added, "accompany me, and pay a visit to the prioress?"

"No," she answered, "I will rather wait your return; my anxiety," she continued blushing, "would, probably, show my interest too greatly in worldly concerns, not to draw on me, perhaps, a rebuke from our pious sister, whose mind and thoughts, now elevated above all sublunary things, cannot enter into those tender weaknesses which spring from strong attachments."

"You judge right. I go then — meanwhile all good angels guard my precious Rebecca."

The abbot had received the account of his friend's decease; he was, therefore, the less surprised when his son, at once, opened his views, and requested his holy benediction and consent to unite him to Rebecca.

"I shall not refuse my sanction," he replied, gravely accompanied with a benignant smile, "in consideration of the ancient friendship which existed between your father and myself. Rebecca Russell is a comely, modest young maiden; she seems to have a mind so pure, innocent, and good, it is to be lamented that it is not beatified; and worldly happiness is more precious than becoming one of the Benedictine daughters. But we use no compulsion; and as her sainted sister (for she will become one in time) has not been able to let her see her error, I shall even, John, forward your carnal wishes to the fair Rebecca. I will the more readily bejecting tend condition

The abbot withdrew, and soon returning, he brought a letter from Constance to Rebecca, which he gave in charge to Sir John.

Rebecca required not to question her lover on the success of his visit at the convent, as his eyes beamed upon her with renewed tenderness and delight, on presenting the prioress's letter. It was as follows :

“ Though now withdrawn from all secular pursuits, and devoted, in thought and action, to the higher concerns of my important calling, yet my sister and friend, and always beloved Rebecca, be assured that I wish you, from my heart, all earthly happiness in the way you now are seeking it. You have a bright example always before you in my sainted mother of what were the duties of a wife ; of the conjugal affection of one whose days, whose thoughts, were devoted to the happiness and interests of her hus-

band. Imitate her; walk in her path with the same integrity, and then Sir John Berry will have cause to give praise to God for blessing him with such a spouse as my Rebecca.

“ My uncle, the abbot, will join your hands in the cathedral, and I shall attend the ceremony.

“ You know our hours of leisure for visiting the monastery.

PRIORESS OF ST. AUGUSTINE.”

Thus, kindly invited, and her marriage so happily sanctioned, Rebecca hastened to the convent, and in the bosom of her friend poured forth the fulness of her joy. She wrote to Mrs. Chesterville and Juliet, requesting the latter to be present at her nuptials, which she would defer until her arrival, could she obtain permission to attend them.

Yet, amidst the sunshine of her happiness, her thoughts naturally reverted to the awful circumstances which attended

her former engagement, she bestowed a sigh of mournful respect as the memory of her generous benefactor and friend, Mr. Templeton. Neither could she banish altogether from her thoughts the terrible vow she had made to Sir Ambrose, nor divest herself of the terror which he inspired, whenever the idea of him obtruded on her mind.

Seated in pensive abstraction, she was suddenly roused from her reverie by Sir John, who, tenderly chiding her thoughtfulness, anxiously enquired what affected her, for her brow was clouded with care, her eyes suffused with tears, and a look of timid apprehension spread over a face pale and sorrowful.

Ever above disguise, open, ingenuous, and sincere, she at once told Sir John, there were so many mournful and peculiar circumstances attached to her extraordinary life, that even her happiest hours were sometimes embittered from perfect enjoyment. "At some future pe-

riod," she added, suppressing a sigh, "when our felicities and sorrows are interwoven together, he should be made acquainted with the particulars; at present," she proceeded, sweetly smiling upon him, "I will not cast a shade on this felicitous period."

"Oh, quickly then," he cried, with warmth, "let that blessed period arrive when we shall be as one, that each thought may be laid open. When your gentleness and amiability shall soothe every passing sorrow, and your cheerfulness and contentment gladden every hour of that life which will always be consecrated to your happiness.

"Oh, lovely Rebecca," he continued, "let me not linger in suspense, but at once name the day which secures you mine for ever." She told him she only waited the reply of letters from her friends, the Chestervilles, and then would accede to his wishes.

As speedily as the tardy conveyances at that period admitted, arrived not only Juliet Chesterville, but her father also, to once more give Rebecca away.

CHAP. XXXII.

JOYFUL was the nuptial morning to all. In the cathedral the marriage ceremony was performed by Abbot Laurence ; and though conducted without pomp, the solemnity of the place, the awfulness of the ceremony, and the sacred duties upon which she was entering, affected Rebecca exceedingly ; and it was not until folded in the arms of her husband, and congratulations went round, she smiled upon Sir John with that happy countenance which gave him assurance and delight.

Rebecca, during the ceremony, seemed to dread some terrible interruption, as on a former occasion ; and, though she endeavoured to collect her thoughts, and felt the sacred and solemn ceremony thrill to her soul, yet every now and

then the fearful figure of Sir Ambrose Templeton seemed to glance before her, and tear her from that altar at which she was now offering her vows to the object of her choice, to the object who was to constitute her future happiness.

Mr. Chesterville gave her encouragement and support, whilst the gentle Juliet tenderly smiled upon her; and the pious, respected prioress, when the ceremony ended, pressed her to her bosom, with many benedictions and cheering expressions of kindness.

Young Elton formed some feeble excuse for his absence. He had not fortitude to witness Rebecca's felicity with another; but he left a letter, written with the affection of a brother and a friend, enclosing, at the same time, as a tribute of respect to his father's memory, a draft of five hundred pounds for a marriage present in any ornament she chose to purchase.

"Reject not this little gift," he said,

“nor wound my feelings by the refusal of so poor a testimony of the brotherly affection of one whose parents considered you as a daughter.

“Felicity, pure as thyself, ever light on thee !”

Rebecca, affected by this testimony of young Elton's regard, rejected not his proffered liberality ; with a sentiment of tenderness and gratitude, she expressed herself towards him.

From the cathedral Sir John and Lady Berry proceeded to a rural habitation called Woodside, a paternal cottage of the Eltons, which the prioress insisted on their occupying for the present ; and, indeed, had most generously proposed making over to Rebecca. A proposal, however, to which she would not accede, though she cheerfully consented to spend the first few weeks after her marriage at Woodside.

The beautiful sequestered situation was particularly suited to the taste of the

happy young couple : resting on the luxuriant banks of the Avon, embowered in woods, and sheltered by the rocks which bounded the prospect, they wanted not society, and, apparently shut out from the world, seemed to forget

“ All times, all seasons, and its changes.”

Sir John Berry the more readily agreed to pass some weeks at Woodside, rather than take his bride to his paternal estate in Leicestershire, from the daily and dreadful apprehension he felt of being called on immediate duty. In the vicinity of Bristol his wife would not be left quite desolate, as in a strange country, and in the prioress she possessed always an able adviser and steady friend. He was sensible the tumultuous scene of war was no place for the tender, timid Rebecca, and, though gratefully he enjoyed his present happiness, he was but too sure of soon being called into action,

and of being torn from all that render existence precious.

These thoughts and feelings he carefully concealed in his own bosom ; he gazed with delight on the happy, sedate countenance of Rebecca, listened with rapture to all she said ; hung upon every word with the adulation of a lover ; yet, as he did so, he daily discovered that some new beauty of mind unfolded itself ; that she was meek, though dignified — full of tenderness, divested of weakness, and a strength of mind which could not be easily subdued — she was graceful, yet artless, and every action was so regulated by principle and truth, that to err seemed impossible ; she had all the natural buoyancy of youth, but it was so tempered by softness, as to give a peculiar delicacy to her manners and character.

In Sir John Berry, Rebecca had married the only man to whom her heart was ever entirely devoted. She would

have considered it an imperious duty to have consecrated her life to the study of Mr. Templeton's happiness, had they been united, for he had inspired the highest respect and gratitude; but Sir John Berry was the idol of her affection; she looked up to him as one she consigned herself to, with the certainty, that if happiness could be felt on earth, in him alone it centered. She considered her lot blest beyond what she could have imagined; and, though not elevated by it to a sense of forgetfulness from what source it sprang, she, at times, almost trembled from the uncertainty of how long she might be permitted to taste felicity so perfect.

CHAP. XXXIII.

OH! how brief is happiness!—how impossible to describe!—only transiently felt, it passes away like some delusive dream, and the spirit again awakes but to a sense of pain.

Pure felicity, a foretaste of heaven, is not long permitted on earth; else, creating a paradise for self, every faculty would be absorbed in its own selfish enjoyment, and forget this is but a pilgrimage to a better world, a state of suffering and of trial, to prove the test of our virtue, faith, and resignation.

It was after one of the many happy days of calm domestic felicity, Sir John and Rebecca had shared together, a letter was presented to him, which came by a special messenger. From the outside he saw it was official. Even before he pe-

rused the contents, he opened it with emotion, not from a feeling of cowardice, for he gloried in the profession of a soldier, but he trembled at the idea of leaving his wife, who gave him the fond promise of becoming a mother.

Rebecca's quick apprehensive eye saw, as Sir John rose from his chair, and went to the window to conceal his agitation, that the news was sudden and unpropitious. He spoke not, but folding the letter, and putting it into his waistcoat pocket, and taking pen and paper, wrote a few hurried lines, which, having sealed, he ordered the servant to give to the messenger.

It was vain to conceal the emotion which spoke in his dejected mien, in the sorrowful expression of his eyes, and that abstraction which for a time possessed him. "May I not learn," Rebecca cried, in a timid tender accent, "what has disturbed you, dear Sir John? Have I no claim to your confidence, that

thus silently you remain, and will not suffer me to participate in your anxieties?" She flung her snowy arms round his neck, and anxiously regarded him. "Oh, my precious Rebecca," he returned, deeply penetrated, "ask not—anticipate not what requires more than manly fortitude to support. Soothe me not; a sweetness, a tenderness, which quite overwhelms me. Existing but in your presence, how can I endure this terrible separation?"

"Life of my fondest affection," he continued, with emotion, "deserving the most perfect felicity, why, ah, why did you blend your destiny with that of a soldier, whose life is that of tumult, and hangs on the most fearful uncertainty? Now to separate from you,—at a moment when blessings seemed to multiply——"

"With felicity so pure," interrupted Rebecca, "which we of late have tasted, think you it was to last for ever? No,

best beloved, when I became your wife, was it not to share the common lot of humanity? to meekly take the evil with the good? Though it is sad to part, is it not, dear Sir John, in a glorious cause, for the service of your country? Had it been ignobly, then would your Rebecca have wept floods of bitter tears; but those now shed spring only from fond regret and pure affection. Take then these as pledges, that my heart owns no other lord, for you are its only idol."

"With that sweet assurance," replied her husband, much affected, "let us then now separate. To listen to you longer, to hear that soul-subduing voice breathing such words of love and tenderness, will again unman me. Leave me, exalted, gentle creature," he added, pressing her to his bosom; "for were you longer to remain, I could not collect my thoughts for those important matters

which must be settled ere I go ; perhaps ——”

His voice here failed him ; and hurrying out of the room, he left his wretched wife to solitary and mournful meditation.

Some time Rebecca sat motionless, almost deprived of sense or feeling, till roused by her maid, who softly spoke to her. Then, indeed, she awoke to a full sense of her misery, and eagerly enquired for Sir John.

“ My master,” Amy replied, “ is in his study, and desired my Lady on no account to be disturbed. He is engaged with Master Simpson, the attorney.”

“ I will remain here then till he is at leisure : leave me, Amy.”

“ Pray, my Lady, go to bed. Sir John ordered me to persuade you ; and I assure you are too ill to sit up.

“ If,” replied Rebecca, “ Sir John desired me to retire, I will obey him —

It is of little consequence where I am, for sleep and peace have fled my pillow."

Pale, exhausted, her eyes swoln with weeping, Lady Berry withdrew to her chamber, having desired, when Sir John rang, he might be informed she had retired.

Amy Watson, a good-natured faithful girl, earnestly asked permission to sit beside her lady. Rebecca, glad to be alone, declined her offer, that she might indulge her grief where no eye could see her; and hiding her face on her pillow gave way to an unrestrained burst of grief, for her heart was full and heavy.

In vain she watched, and wept the most part of the night away, till, quite exhausted, she fell into a disturbed and feverish slumber.

Sir John Berry sat up till nearly morning, settling his worldly concerns. Aware of the uncertainty of a soldier's life when called into action, he wished to spare his beloved Rebecca all future anxiety,

by putting her in immediate possession of his Leicestershire estate, until their child (should it be a son) came of age.

He now softly stole to the arms of his precious wife. For some minutes he stood gazing on her, as she slept, in an agony of grief and tenderness. Her sleep seemed heavy and disturbed; her cheek flushed with fever; and from beneath her silken eye-lash rested a tear just shed.

“ Oh ! my Rebecca, wife of my bosom, lovely as beloved, more precious than the air I breathe, receive my choicest blessings,” clasping his hands in anguish, as he fondly hung over her. “ Peace, such as angels know, light on your pillow, bless your slumbers. Brief, indeed, has been my felicity ; but, ah, how unmixed till now with sorrow ! ”

“ Let me,” he continued, with bitterness, “ in this last, this agonizing moment spare you, sweetest Rebecca, one pang of suffering. Sleep on, angelic crea-

ture! wake not now to a sense of misery.” He gently raised her extended hand, pressed it to his heart, and in that pressure took a long and last farewell.

He rushed from the chamber, and instantly prepared to leave that home of bliss which contained all which could render life desirable.

Sir John left on her dressing-table the two following stanzas, which, with her pen and paper scattered before him, he had hastily written.

“ Sweet sleep upon thy eyelids rest,
No anxious cares thy soul molest;
Soft be the dreams that visit thee;
And in those dreams remember me !

“ And when thy gentle slumbers fly;
Nor dreams fictitious joys supply;
Awake. May pleasure dwell with thee,
And waking — still remember me !”

Sir John Berry had scarcely left Woodside ere Rebecca awoke. Hastily rising, she heard with dismay that her husband was actually gone.

She rather would have lived through the agonizing moment of hearing his farewell accent, than to thus have separated—have caught his last look—have pressed him to her heart, and prayed for his return and victory. But it could not be. All now was silent, desolate, and melancholy. Every faculty seemed so stupified by sorrow, that it was not until she began to turn over her papers she discovered the tender lines he had addressed to her, which seemed, in some degree, to recall her to a sense of suffering, and relieve her oppressed heart in a flood of tears. Amy advised her lady either to go to the convent, or entreat the prioress to come to Woodside to comfort her. But Rebecca preferred being alone; and, shutting herself up in her chamber, gave way to all those sad forebodings which overwhelm the mind in the hour of separation from those we love.

The day past heavily; but the evening offered some consolation in the following

tender letter, which was brought her from her husband, dated twenty miles from Bristol, on the way to join his regiment.

“ To Lady Berry.

“ It would have been inhuman, oh, best beloved of my soul! to have awakened you from even temporary repose to a sense of that misery which this separation will cost you. I have, therefore, dearest Rebecca, endeavoured to spare you the pang of such a moment. Oh, with fortitude sustain yourself, for the sake of an adoring husband.

“ Seek consolation in the bosom of the prioress Constance. In the stillness of that sanctuary which shelters the afflicted; in the monastery of the Benedictines I advise you to board, till you hear further from me. Woodside will prove but a mournful solitude; and the holy abbot and the prioress will sympathize and comfort you.

“ Soon, on the wings of love, I hope
to fly to my Rebecca, and remain always
her

“ Most affectionate husband,

“ JOHN BERRY.”

CHAP. XXXIV.

REBECCA became more composed and
d after perusing Sir John's letter.
The following day she went to the
, where, in prayer, and consol-
ation from her friend, she found support.
She became more reconciled to her lot;
though she could not prevail on
to wholly abandon Woodside, she,
according to her husband's desire, spent
most of her time at Bristol. She
obtained Sir John's permission to retain this
paradise; for she loved its mourn-
ful solitude. She loved to sit in the
spot where they had sat together;
under the impervious woods,
in sweet communion they had
sat together, recalling his image
in its sequestered shades.
A few days after Rebecca had joined

the little community, the prioress, who held correspondence with the holy mother of a convent of the same order in Normandy, received intimation from the lady abbess, that a young novice of high rank was to be professed on such a day, and invited the prioress to come over and preside at the ceremony.

The prioress accepted the invitation ; and asked Lady Berry to accompany her into Normandy, persuaded the voyage and novel scene would naturally awaken an interest, which would rouse her from the state of depression and restless anxiety into which she had fallen, in consequence of her husband's sudden and unlooked-for absence.

Rebecca, wholly absorbed in one subject, felt an apathy concerning all others ; and to the proposal of her friend gave a refusal, glad of an excuse to return to her beloved Woodside, where she long wished to be once more, that she might

give a free indulgence to that grief which daily was increasing upon her.

The prioress seriously contended with her on the impiety of an immoderate indulgence of sorrow, and too ardently fixing her affections on any worldly object, if it was to wean her from more important and higher concerns ; and at length she so persuasively pleaded with Rebecca, as to draw from her a reluctant consent to go with her into Normandy, as their absence was to be very short ; staying only during the period of the solemn festival.

One powerful motive also induced Lady Berry to accede to her friend's desire, the conviction that her beloved husband would be pleased to find she had engaged in any pursuit that might divert her mind during his absence.

The friends embarked at Bristol, and were, after a short and favourable voyage, landed in the beautiful and magnificent harbour at Havre-de-Grace.

Insensibly, Rebecca's thoughts were called off from mournful ideas to the contemplation of the lively objects which, for the first time, she now surveyed in a different kingdom. The antique houses, many stories high, irregularly branching into narrow streets, yet full of bustle, and crowded with persons whose attire was of the most grotesque description, quite surprised and amused her. The high fantastic head-dress worn by the females, the short striped petticoat, high boddice and apron, all composed of different colours, with the pendant gold earrings, chain, and cross of sparkling gems, had a most whimsical, yet picturesque appearance; but their light, graceful carriage and courteous manners particularly attracted and pleased her.

The surrounding scenery was grand and beautiful, with the romantic village of d'Engonville, scattered on the brow of the hill which hangs over the town.

The convent was situated in one of

those sequestered and richly-wooded recesses often to be met with amidst the rich plains of Normandy, on the banks of the Seine, not far from the beautiful village of Harfleur.

The prioress and her fair friend were most graciously received by the Lady Abbess; but there was a stern and solemn dignity in her demeanour, from which the youthful and depressed Rebecca shrank with apprehension and timidity. She surveyed this living sepulchre with a degree of horror, when she saw so many young and interesting women doomed "to waste their sweetness" and bloom within its dismal walls.

A strong emotion of tenderness and pity took possession of her heart for the young and beautiful novice, who, on the day following, was to take the veil — for she had been the theme of conversation; and a young English boarder, called

Geraldine Beaumont, had spoken of lovely Rosalie with such enthusiasm and interest, that Lady Berry could not miss her from her thoughts.

CHAP. XXXV.

ROSALIE's history was true and sad * — she was the only daughter of the Marquis de V——, the heiress of ——, and the beauty of Provence. Her's was a face in which loveliness was perfect; her eyes were the heralds of a soul elevated to Heaven; for she looked not of this earth, but like some bright spirit that, wandering from its native home, had missed its way, and lingered here.

Fifteen summers had scarcely passed, ere numbers of the most illustrious families in France sought her alliance — all, unsuccessfully, until Eugene d'I—— breathed into the young ear of Rosalie, a passion as pure as it was boundless.

Eugene was by no means the most

* A fact.

Geraldine Beaumont, had spoiled lovely Rosalie with such enthusiastic interest, that Lady Berry could not miss her from her thoughts.

wealthy of her suitors, a circumstance which at first created serious opposition from her father ; but to her the lack of gold was as nothing. It was enough to know Eugene — France had rung with the fame of his exploits. The blood of Bayard flowed through his veins, and, like his great ancestor, he also was *sans peur, et sans reproche*. True, the famous gold sword was lost with which that prince of chivalry had knighted Francis the First, but the young hero boasted of still having in his possession the steel weapon which the good knight had girded on in his first crusade,

Rosalie's heart beat high at the endless tales of her lover's valour, whose deeds of arms had gained for him the title of the modern Bayard. Fired with ambition, he had been called to the field of glory in one of Louis the Fourteenth's successful victories, where he eminently distinguished himself, and though his parting with Rosalie appeared

the climax of his misery, yet Eugene again preferred the laurel to woman's love.

The two succeeding months brought tidings of Eugene's welfare and repetitions of his constancy, but soon, too soon, his letters became less frequent, and at length they came no longer.

At first Rosalie's father tried to soothe and to console her; but finding all his efforts unavailing, he called upon her pride to banish from her thoughts a person it was evident had long ceased to remember her.

From that moment the name of Eugene never escaped her lips, but remained in a heart that had too long been its home for pride or reason to repel.

The calmness of despair the Marquis mistook for resignation or forgetfulness, though he perceived the cheek of his once peerless Rosalie became every day more colourless, except when the flitting tenderness of some thought flashed

across it, and, for a moment, restored the glowing tints of which grief had robbed it; yet, though wasted, it still was lovely,

“ As if the white rose triumph’d o’er the red.”

A year elapsed without any tidings of the faithless Eugene; and the Marquis de V——, who had resolved from her childhood that his daughter should be the medium through which his wildest dreams of ambition were to be realized, acquainted her, with an air of triumph, accompanied with the most cruel animadversions on Eugene’s worthlessness and inconstancy, of the proposals of the Duke de M——, one of the most powerful men in France. He accompanied this intelligence with a sort of compulsory entreaty, which parents of the Marquis’s description use on the like occasions. Rosalie felt as if she were losing Eugene anew, when urged so warmly to accept the Duke.

Upon her mildly, yet firmly, declaring her intention of never marrying, the rage and resentment of her father was as boundless as the ambition which prompted him to sacrifice his daughter's happiness to her aggrandizement. Finding that threats and persuasions were alike powerless in dissuading her from her purpose, he banished her to the convent of ———, in Normandy, and settled all her fortune on her brother.

During the first year of Rosalie's seclusion, her father seemed to have forgotten such a person existed as his once darling child, for he neither wrote nor made any enquiries concerning her.

Three months after she had entered on her novitiate, the Marquis arrived at the convent in deep mourning, in all the agitation of despair and affliction. His only son, on whom he had bestowed unbounded wealth, by his injustice to his daughter, had just fallen in a duel at Paris. Frantic with grief and disap-

pointment, he hastened to his formerly deserted child, in whom now his sole hope and expectation centered, impatient to rescue her from the retreat in which he had immured her.

Rosalie, noble spirited, tender, and affectionate, forgot all the injuries she had sustained when she beheld her father's grief, and was deeply touched with the account of her brother's premature and violent death ; with the most caressing fondness she tried to soothe and console him, and had almost consented to return with him to that world she determined to renounce for ever, when, with no consideration for his daughter's feelings, he abruptly announced to her, that Eugene also was no more ; and with the same breath urged vehemently the Duke's suit, and his intention to bestow her hand upon him.

For some time Rosalie was incapable of speaking, from the dreadful shock which she sustained ; but, when suffi-

ciently restored to her faculties, she calmly told her father, her predilection was for a religious life, and when her few probationary months expired, her determination was fixed to take the black veil.

Her father rushed from her, speechless with rage, whilst the poor Rosalie crept to her cell, where she shut herself up with that desolate feeling of having lost every thing precious to her on earth, and for some time gave way to unavailing sorrow and despair.

Rosalie was fondly beloved by the nuns. From the kindness they lavished on her, she soon experienced the reality of that resignation which her beatified appearance had given to her countenance and air.

A young English scholar in the convent, Geraldine Beaumont, spent hours weeping over the lovely Rosalie, and imploring her to return to Provence. In short, to do any thing rather than

immure herself within the impenetrable walls of a cloister. The young novice answered, "She had now no hope, no joy, beyond its walls; and that in Eugene's grave was buried that happiness which now had shed so sweet a promise over futurity. Here then," she added, with a look of meek resignation, "I will live, here die. Attempt not, dear Geraldine, to shake my purpose, or weaken my mind by vain arguments against the solemn vows which so soon are to be performed."

CHAP. XXXVI.

THE last night of Rosalie's being free had now arrived; and her young English friend hastened to her cell to offer her last and most powerful arguments, to dissuade her from pronouncing the irrevocable vow.

When Geraldine Beaumont entered, Rosalie was kneeling before a crucifix, her beautiful eyes uplifted in prayer. It was a night all bright and lovely; no lamp burnt on the shrine before which the fair novice knelt. The soft uncertain light which the moon-beam shed around her, gave to her face and figure, partially concealed by her snowy veil, more the appearance of some fair vision, than a being of this nether world.

“ And this,” thought Geraldine, as she mournfully gazed on her friend, “ is the creature that would here immure herself for ever. True, she is fitter for heaven than earth,” she exclaimed, with a heavy sigh.

The sigh caused Rosalie to cast her eyes around. On perceiving her friend, she rose, and throwing herself on the bosom of the weeping girl, said, “ Ah! my poor Geraldine! I know, too well, the purport of your visit; but why persuade me to return to a world where only misery for me is prepared. How delusive have proved its brightest pleasures; here then is my surest anchor; the haven of perpetual rest; the truest foretaste of the world to come.”

Geraldine could only weep, for she was unable to reply.

“ How often,” continued Rosalie, assuming a more cheerful tone, “ have you wished to see me in all the glittering

decorations of a court attire. Pray observe how I shall look in this finery to-morrow," pointing to where lay a costly dress of the purest white, with a casket of pearls beside it. On the back of the chair hung a bridal coronet of orange blossoms, and a silver veil, all to deck her in the morning in nuptial mockery.

Geraldine cast her streaming eyes upon them, but as quickly turned away. Sick at heart, she burst into a paroxysm of grief, and weeping as she fondly hung over Rosalie, again and again entreated her not to renounce the world.

Rosalie distressed, disturbed beyond measure, because unshaken in her resolve, was going to speak, when she was startled by the light notes of a guitar, accompanied by a low sweet voice, and trembling violently as she raised her head to catch the floating sound, heard distinctly the well-remembered air and words so oft she sang in Provence : —

“ By the grief, that has blighted the bloom of my
years ;
By life's moments of bliss, and its ages of tears ;
By hope's buds which in flowers for an instant have
blush'd,
And the next by despair's withering touch have
been crush'd ;
By these — nay and more, by the joys I've known
never,
Though hopeless, though fruitless, *I'll love thee for
ever !*

“ By the pilgrim, that's knelt at some far distant
shrine,
(Yet ne'er felt a purer devotion than mine ;)
By the wild thrilling notes, those fairy harps fling
On the gale, when they're swept by the air-spirit's
wing ;
By these — nay and more, by thy voice, whose
tones never
Can sleep in my soul — *I'll love thee for ever !*

“ By yon moon, which like memory shines out at
night,
And reflects back each past sunny ray of delight ;
By that true bird, that sings but for one valued
flower,
Though others more lovely should bloom the same
hour ;
By these — nay and more, by thine image, which
never
Shall be lured from my heart — *I'll love thee for
ever !*

"By thy look when we parted (that sweet summer night),

That beam'd such a ling'ring farewell to delight ;
By the hope that it gave, and the tear it received,
By thy softly breath'd vows, I so fondly believed ;
By these — nay and more, by each thought, which
can never

But be of *thee only* — *I'll love thee for ever !*"

"Do not leave me, dear Geraldine," cried she, in agitation. "Oh, that air — those words — whence come they? none, save Eugene, could know them. It was a romance which he composed in our days of happiness and love ; surely it is some illusion which steals upon my senses, to try my fidelity to that heaven I am preparing to devote myself.

"O, my God," she continued with fervour, throwing herself on her knees before the crucifix, and raising her clasped hands in the act of devotion, "Thine I am, and thine I will be, in all sincerity of heart."

"It is no illusion," returned Geraldine, "only listen," as she attempted to

climber up to the high window that traversed the tower, that she might discover the interesting performer; but the music had ceased, and she saw no person whatever.

"But I think it an illusion," said the ~~good~~ *Henrietta* entering the cell, with a lamp which she held full in Geraldine's face as she descended from the window; "it surely ~~can~~ must deceive me, when they show me the Mademoiselle Beaumont out of her bed at this hour of night. Besides," turning to Rosalie, "she is ~~improving~~ by such vigils, and ~~avoiding~~ idle talk, our dear child here, for the glorious day she is to have to-morrow."

The lady Henrietta being mother of the ~~house~~ *next* in command to the abbess, was ~~about~~ *the* formidable and important a personage to be disobeyed; this she knew — consequently her mandates were like the laws of the Medes and Persians, "which altereth not."

Geraldine imprinted a kiss on the cheek of her friend ; and in so doing, felt not that sentiment of despair she would have experienced, had she taken leave of her a few minutes sooner. Ah ! for the sunny morning of life, when hope can build on so slight a foundation as the wild notes of a passing song—yet that song seemed to breathe something prophetic to the lively imagination of Geraldine, of happiness to Rosalie, which she could not fancy existing within a convent's wall.

Hope ! sweet Hope ! let philosophers analyze thee into nothing—let stoics discard thee to seek for realities that exist not—let those who have lost thee rail, like the fallen angels, at the Paradise they cannot regain ; thou wilt still have thy votaries in the good, the young, the innocent, and the beautiful, who know that thou art the telescope through which alone all that is bright and glorious, and above them, may be approached.

As Geraldine was crossing the corridor that led to the dormitory, a lay-sister passed her, and putting a twisted paper into her hand, hastily withdrew. She went to a lamp, and, looking anxiously around, opened it; but what was her astonishment on finding it was a billet to Rosalie, signed "Eugene d'—." It was not to her; she read no more — it was transport enough to know the young Viscomte d'I——, by some surprising miracle, was actually alive, and that her beloved Rosalie might yet be happy.

She had no room for conjectures about Eugene's resurrection. Joy absorbed every faculty; and, almost wild with delight, she was retracing, with hurried steps, her way to Rosalie's cell, till the thought struck her that Hypolita might still be there; reflecting, at the same time, how imprudent it would be to acquaint her friend in so abrupt a manner of Eugene's existence, she turned

back, resolved to wait another hour as patiently as she could, as that night it was her turn to trim the Virgin's lamp, which would form a feasible excuse should she meet any of the nuns, as she must pass the door of Rosalie's cell in her way to and from the chapel.

When she reached the dormitory, she threw herself on the bed, and began revolving on the best method of communicating the joyous tidings of which she was the herald.

Never had time appeared to move on such leaden wings as on that night. "The iron tongue of midnight," whose summons she reluctantly obeyed to proceed to the cold chapel, was now watched for with as much impatience and anxiety as a lover would listen for the steps of his beloved. The heavy bell at length tolled ; and never before had its call been obeyed with such alacrity.

Geraldine rose ere it ceased to sound ; and, taking the precaution to secrete the

precious billet in her bosom, she seized the lamp, and ran, or rather flew, along the passage, and was just turning into the one which contained the cell of the young novice, when she was greeted with a "*Santa Maria*" from the inquisitive Lady Hypolita, who asked, "where she was going in such haste?" On being told it was to trim the Virgin's lamp, she graciously signified her intention of accompanying her, and assisting in the pious office.

Resistance was vain; therefore Geraldine had only to comply with the best grace she could assume, and they proceeded together, her thoughts distracted, and her frame agitated by disappointment, in thus having her intentions so cruelly frustrated by so untoward a circumstance.

The Lady Hypolita was in one of her talking moods, and chattered without ceasing. She was one of those who possessed that happy species of loquacity,

which consists in putting a million of questions which never require answers from those to whom they are addressed.

When they reached the chapel, Geraldine felt a sort of anticipated triumph, as she looked at the preparations for the approaching sacrifice, and knew, or rather hoped (for at her age hope is certainty,) that they were all making in vain. As she passed the choir, she perceived that every book was open at Mozart's Requiem, and next to it were the hymns of rejoicing. From the walls hung wreathed white roses, intermixed with cypress branches.

A chill stole over her heart as she gazed on them.

Was not this mingling of blight and bloom, of love, of death, of beauty, and desolation, an emblem of all earthly things?

Bright were the perfumed flames that issued from the gilded censers; but where did their lights fall? On graves.

It was a scene there was no dwelling upon. She hurried away to the outer chapel, where her task was soon performed. As she cast her eyes on the divine image before her, she almost ceased to wonder at those who knelt and worshipped there ; it was a face of such pure beatified sweetness, a form of such soul-fraught disembodied loveliness. *Corregio!* thou art worthy heaven, who could so pourtray its attributes !

Geraldine hoped that the Lady Hypolita (who had knelt down on the first step of the altar,) would remain, and piously prolong her orisons ; but again she was disappointed, for on perceiving that Geraldine was about to withdraw, she gabbled an *Ave Maria* over the last bead of her rosary, and rising hastily, followed her.

Geraldine's last hope was gone on finding the nun close to her, when she reached the door of Rosalie's cell ; till, recollecting that she had left her chaplet

there, she boldly put her hand on the lock, but was prevented opening it by Hypolita seizing her arm, and asking what she wanted there.

On being told, she replied, "O, you are pious to-night, Mademoiselle; but here is mine for you, which will answer till the morning, when I will bring your own, without disturbing our good sister for it now. Don't be alarmed, you shall have it time enough; I shall be with you at seven, as I dress at six, to have the happiness of attending our dear sister at her profession, and the honour of breakfasting with our holy mother."

To this there was no appeal, and Geraldine was obliged to follow her tormentor in silent vexation, as she officiously insisted on helping her to undress.

It was customary for one of the nuns to patrol up and down the dormitory all night: this duty the Lady Hypolita thought proper to perform on the present

occasion ; therefore her prisoner had no chance of escape.

Never did lover, murderer, or penitent pass a more sleepless, anxious night than poor Geraldine.

She arose in the morning long before the nun appeared to assist at her toilet. The sun shone with more brilliancy, the flowers looked more lovely, the air felt more balmy, she fancied, than usual, and she hailed them all as some propitious omen. From the windows was to be seen the beautiful lake, sparkling in the sunbeams which danced on its glassy surface, and all nature seemed with gladness to hail this auspicious morning.

Spite of the ill success of her billet, she still hoped that all would be well. She now presented herself to Geraldine at the same moment Hypolita entered, laden with white dresses, white veils, and white roses. While adjusting Geraldine's share of them, she expatiated largely on the advantages Rosalie was

about to derive in renouncing such gauds and vanities for ever ; and was beginning to enter, for the hundredth time, on the history of St. Marie de Palle, the founder of the convent, and all the glories appertaining thereto, when the last breakfast-bell rang, and she was compelled to leave her auditor, but not without escorting her to the refectory.

Non Nobis Domine had commenced. Hypolita led Geraldine up to the superior's table, where the other five attendants of the young novice were already assembled. Geraldine looked earnestly round, but no Rosalie appeared ; and it was in vain that she and her companions ate the finest fruits, drank the choicest wines, and had the honour of sitting at the same table with the abbess, and casting their eyes on her ruby rosary, golden crucifix, diamond reliquary, and all her other trappings of office, they still felt sick at heart at the thoughts of what was to follow. Even Geraldine's last

hope faded away when she learnt that they should not see Rosalie till they saw her in the chapel, as it was against the monastic rules for a nun-elect to hold communion with any one on the day of her profession, until the ceremony was over.

The breakfast seemed endless, and the sermon (which on that morning treated of nothing but the horrors of the world, and the joys of a cloister,) still more so. At length both ended, and the whole assemblage passed from the refectory to the chapel.

Geraldine made one of the six girls who attended the poor victim; each, as they entered the chapel, received a lighted torch, and a silver urn filled with flowers.

Geraldine Beaumont was a lovely young matron, with a complexion transparently fair, and a blooming soft colour, radiant as a tender summer rose. Her eyes were large, dark, and brilliant; her eyebrows arched, and finely pen-

cilled; her raven hair was partially shaded with the chaplet of roses, which encircled her brows, with a white veil forming the drapery; her mouth exquisitely beautiful, was usually dimpled with smiles, but now every expression was changed into sadness; for though Geraldine was blessed with all the hilarity of youth, good temper, and a lively imagination, yet she possessed, with a firmness of character very uncommon in so young a person, a tenderness and warmth of heart, though somewhat tinctured with enthusiasm, which rendered her a very attaching character.

The sable curtain was not yet withdrawn before the grate, but hung like the dark shadow of the wings of death. The bishops, priests, and choristers, were gorgeously apparelled. The atmosphere was heavy with incense; one long aisle of the church was lined with nuns, the other was occupied by the novices. Near the grate was a raised platform, round

which the six attendants of the destined nun were stationed. On the dais were placed three crimson velvet seats, richly embroidered in gold. That on the right was filled by the Lady Abbess; the one on the left by the Lady Hypolita; and in the centre sat Rosalie, attired, and looking like an imperial bride, or rather the effigy of one —

“Pale and silent like a shadowy thing
That had look'd on the other world, and known
The secrets of the grave.”

L. E. L.

She was, indeed, lovely beyond description. Her eyes saw nothing but the ground, and the snowy lids that veiled them, made her appear as if she were sleeping the calm cold sleep of death, whilst her sunny hair waved in redundant beauty for the last time over her fair forehead and shoulders.

 rning light streamed in a thou-
 rs through the long-painted

windows, as if to outvie the false glare of the countless torches; it seemed a struggle of nature with art; at length nature conquered. The sun forced his way like an eastern monarch, and filled the space with all his glory. A death-like silence reigned for the space of a minute, when the curtain was withdrawn from before the grate, so as to give a full view of all that passed within to the spectators in the outward chapel, which was crowded to excess.

Murmurs of pity and regret almost universally arose at sight of the youth and beauty of the destined victim. They soon, however, were drowned by the loud peal of the organ, and the swelling voices of the choristers.

The music ceased, and the bishop commenced his exhortation, which lasted about an hour, when he descended from the pulpit, and advancing towards the grate, (where the novice had knelt during the sermon,) he placed his hands upon

her head, and after pronouncing a benediction on her, solemnly enquired, if there was any just or reasonable objection to her entering into the holy state of life she was about to embrace?

She firmly answered, "None!"

Her six attendants then advanced, and strewing flowers at her feet, she trampled on them, saying, "It was so she should henceforth spurn the pleasures of the world!"

The abbess next came forward, and undid the white wreath, silver veil, and diamond fillet that confined her hair, which being flung on the ground, she crushed, as she previously had done the flowers. This was not enough; the greatest of all her ornaments was yet to share the same fate; the lovely glossy ringlets of auburn hair, which fell in a thousand natural curls below her waist, were now unconfined, the priest took in his hand, and in a tremulous voice said, "And these tresses too, the gift of na-

ture, art thou, daughter of heaven, as willing to renounce, as those ornaments of art?"

She again replied in the affirmative.

At the moment many left the chapel, overcome by the solemn and affecting scene, while tears drowned every eye of those who remained, when they beheld the fatal scissors suspended over her soft silken curls, ready to sever them for ever from the beautifully formed head on which they grew.

Still the priest paused.

Rosalie raised her dove-like eyes to his, as if to enquire the cause of his delay. He asked her again, more slowly than before, "If she had no reluctance in making such a sacrifice?" as he held her lovely tresses in his hand.

Rosalie was ready to reply once more that she had not, when a sudden and violent tumult arose in the outer chapel, and the ceremony was suspended by a man rushing through the crowd, crying,

with increasing vehemence, "Stop—I
desist, I say."

It was the Marquis de V——, Rosalie's
father.

"Oh, my father!" she exclaimed, now
agonized for the first time almost to faint-
ing, as she flung herself at his feet,
—how cruel at such a moment, to thus
interrupt the holy calm which Heaven
had shed upon me. Wherefore come you,
when I cannot now retract?"

"I mean not that you should, my
child," said the Marquis, raising her, as
he folded her to his breast; "but here
is one," he continued, with a sort of
proud triumph, "that merits more con-
sideration from my Rosalie," drawing a
young man forward.

She uttered a wild scream, and sank
lifeless into the arms of Eugene.

Geraldine, almost frantic with joy that
at last her anxious hopes were actually
realized, could scarcely contain the tri-

mult. of her feelings as she beheld the interesting scene.

The Lady Hypolita, afraid they would be scandalised by such a scene, suddenly drew the curtain closely over the grate ; whilst all those within, and those without the chapel, waited, in breathless anxiety and impatience, to see what would prove the result.

It was long ere Rosalie revived. But her lover's tender voice calling on her was not heard in vain ; there was life and happiness in the sound, and when at length she opened her beautiful eyes, they did not close again, as softly they beamed upon Eugene.

Wherefore the abrupt and extraordinary interruption of a ceremony so solemn and so holy, a circumstance almost unprecedented, required to be explained.

The Marquis de V——, on Rosalie's recovering herself, withdrew the curtain, and, stepping forward, addressed the auditory, by publicly confessing, he had

fabricated the death of the young man, Comte Eugene d'I——, they now saw; had intercepted all his letters to his daughter, in the hope that at length he should prevail on her to accept the Duke ——, whose union with her he was anxious to promote. That to the young Comte he had written, Rosalie had changed her sentiments towards him, and was on the eve of becoming the wife of another.

These facts, so humiliating to relate, the Marquis told with a frankness and contrition which in some measure atoned for his former cruel conduct.

Always in extremes, the Marquis now insisted on Rosalie's being immediately united to Eugene, before all those who were assembled to witness a very different spectacle.

With what rapture did the warm-hearted Geraldine Beaumont replace the nuptial wreath and veil, which now shone in their proper place, on the hair of the beautiful and happy young bride.

No sooner had Rosalie become the Viscountess d'I——, than the acclamations of the crowd were rather louder and longer than decorum quite sanctioned in such a place.

The Marquis remained, to console the abbess and sisterhood by rich presents and magnificent endowments for the loss of his daughter; while the bridal pair, accompanied by the faithful Geraldine, instantly quitted the convent, and set off for the family chateau of Eugene's father, situated in Provence.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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DAME REBECCA BERRY.

VOL. II.

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DAME REBECCA BERRY,

OR,

Court Scenes

IN THE REIGN OF

CHARLES THE SECOND.

" Let not that devil,
That cursed curiosity, seduce you
To hunt for needless secrets, which, neglected,
Shall never hurt your quiet; but, once known,
Shall sit upon your heart, pinch it with pain,
And banish the sweet sleep for ever from you.
Go to: — be yet advised."

JANE SHORE.

" What then? Things do their best, — and they and we
Must answer for the intent, and not the event."

OLD PLAY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR

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FATERNOSTER-BOW.

1827.

THE SECOND

THE SECOND PART OF THE
HISTORY OF THE
REIGN OF
HENRY THE SECOND
BY
JAMES TYLER
ESQ.
OF
THE
MIDDLE TEMPLE
IN
LAW
AND
OF
THE
COUNCIL OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
IN
1790

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

DAME REBECCA BERRY.

CHAPTER I.

THE extraordinary and unlooked-for transition which had taken place in the convent, in the marriage of the young novice, instead of her being professed, raised a tumult and disorder which was not easily quelled. But Rosalie's father, the Marquis de V——, was too powerful and illustrious a personage to be disregarded; and the Lady Abbess was under the disagreeable necessity of receiving, with apparent graciousness, those benefices in lieu of his daughter which he now bestowed in the most munificent manner.

The termination of Rosalie's destiny in a happy union with her lover, instead of her taking the vows and becoming a nun, quite delighted Lady Berry ; she longed to have congratulated her upon her present felicity, and to have pressed to her bosom the lovely, warm-hearted Geraldine.

Rebecca said little to the prioress on the subject, as she saw she was dissatisfied with the termination of the day. She was glad to hear her intention of taking leave of the Lady Abbess on the following morning, and immediately embarking for Bristol, if any vessel was bearing that way.

Rebecca's anxiety respecting her husband had never slept—she became most impatient for letters, and determined to go to Woodside for a few days to await their arrival, if despatches from Sir John had not already come.

CHAP. II.

AFTER her temporary absence, Rebecca tasted comparative happiness in the green solitudes of Woodside, now glowing in all the rich beauties of summer ; she built a thousand aërial castles of anticipated delight when her beloved husband should again come home. His letters were full of love and tenderness, and he gave her the promise of a very speedy return.

Several days had thus passed away, when one morning she was surprised to see the abbot advancing through the pleasure-ground, on his fat, sleek mule, with slow and solemn pace ; and, as he drew near the house, stop with an undetermined air, as if irresolute whether or not to proceed, as he evidently had seen her from the open window at which she

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was standing, watching him as he advanced.

At length the gate was opened for him by a little boy, and he entered, but she found with even a graver deportment than usual.

Rebecca, prone to alarm and apprehension, waited not till he entered, but flying towards the abbot, with a faltering accent, enquired the occasion of so unexpected a visit.

The fixed melancholy which spread over his pale countenance too plainly told his afflicting errand. Naturally firm and collected, with a mind prepared to meet with resignation every trial in life, yet this pious, excellent man could not behold the young, the beautiful, the bereaved Rebecca without a degree of painful emotion which he could not conceal.

“Holy father,” she exclaimed in agitation, “speak at once your errand? Keep me not in suspense; I am prepared for

the worst. I read some evil tidings in your tearful eye. You sympathize with the bereaved Rebecca ; you come to tell me that my husband is slain ; you need not speak the word ; you cannot contradict the terrible surmise."

"Return to the house," feebly answered the venerable man (attempting to give her that support which he himself required), "where, dear daughter, I will unfold my mission."

Rebecca, with tottering steps, accompanied the abbot into the small parlour opening into the garden, and, seating herself with a look of anguish and despair, waited in breathless expectation to hear what the venerable man had to say.

He took from his bosom a letter, holding it open, with a mournful and solemn voice he exclaimed, "Daughter of affliction, now is the time to show your submission, your resignation to the dispensations of Providence. It is, alas ! as you surmise, Sir John Berry is slain !"

Uttering a piercing shriek, she fell senseless on the floor. It was long before she came to herself, when she was borne to her bed.

For some time the venerable abbot remained at Woodside; but, finding that Lady Berry's fever and delirium increased to an alarming height, he went back to Bristol, and immediately sent a medical man, accompanied by the prioress, to attend upon Rebecca.

The doctor's apprehension was soon verified. Lady Berry gave premature birth to a dead son; and, for several days, her own life was despaired of.

The watchful, faithful prioress never quitted her friend until she was pronounced out of danger; and, to her vigilance and tender care (under Providence), she owed her partial recovery. Her frame and spirits had sustained a shock which time alone could heal.

When sufficiently come to a sense of her forlorn condition, she requested her

friend to give her the particulars of her husband's death. Sir John had fallen mortally wounded, his horse killed under him, while endeavouring to quell an insurrection in the west, when the king's troops completely routed the rebels. Many valuable officers having shared the same fate as Berry.

Shortly before he expired, he dictated a letter addressed to abbot Lawrence, conjuring him to unfold his death with caution and tenderness to his beloved wife, and to give her the assurance that his last prayer sent to Heaven, was for her support and comfort; he entreated she would endeavour to sustain herself with fortitude and resignation for the sake of her unborn infant; and felt assured, that her virtues and piety would be rewarded by blessings to gladden her future years. Sir John Berry left Mr. Elton his sole executor and guardian for his child; confident of the excellence and integrity of his character, and the

esteem in which he was held by Lady Berry. This proof of Sir John's confidence and friendship affected Mr. Elton extremely. Indeed it proved a severe trial to his feelings, owing to the tender regard he entertained for Rebecca. He had never seen her since her marriage. He judged it better to withdraw himself entirely from her society, than encourage an attachment which personal intercourse could only tend to keep alive. He therefore made an excursion to Liverpool, visited the Chesterville family (his late father's friends), and other commercial towns, on imagined business; thus diverting his mind, till unexpectedly called upon to fulfil the executorship to Sir John Berry's will.

When Rebecca could bear to be removed from Woodside, she boarded herself for a time in the convent, where every spiritual comfort was administered by the holy abbot, and the most soothing kind-

ness poured into her lacerated heart by the pious prioress.

After the first transports of her grief subsided, she sunk into a pensive serenity of mind, and acquired a degree of fortitude and resignation, which religion alone could effect.

Mr. Elton met her with firmness, respect, and kindness. With the most active and friendly exertions he entered into the settlement of her affairs; but Sir John Berry had left every thing in such a clear unencumbered state, little trouble attended their adjustment.

He advised her Ladyship to go into Leicestershire, and take immediate possession of her property there; which, in case of the demise of their child, she was to enjoy during her life, and it was afterwards to go to a distant branch of his family. Mr. Elton told Rebecca that he would meet her at ———; and advised her not to travel alone, but request Mrs. Chesterville to spare her

daughter Charlotte to accompany her. Mr. Elton thought the natural vivacity of that amiable young lady would tend to cheer the dejection and solitude of Lady Berry.

Rebecca saw at once the kind consideration of Mr. Elton towards her, which she returned with a faint smile of grateful acknowledgment.

She wrote to her young friend, as he requested. Mr. Elton, in a letter of his own to Mr. Chesterville, urged the necessity of his compliance, as it was impossible for his sister, now wholly withdrawn from the world, to attend their afflicted friend.

An immediate answer was returned from Mrs. Chesterville to this effect :—

“ To Lady Berry.

“ To refuse dearest Lady Berry’s request to have my daughter Charlotte’s company, is impossible ; I therefore send her with one of her brothers to Bristol.

I hope my kind, amiable Rebecca will find her so far improved by the last year she has added to her youthful life, as to prove a soothing, agreeable companion.

“ May the Almighty comfort and bless you with happier days, fervently wishes your affectionate and sincere

“ CHARLOTTE CHESTERVILLE.”

The prioress was delighted with the arrangement made for Rebecca, as her brother judged it requisite for her to go into Leicestershire; though she could not help fancying that she would have tasted more happiness and repose in the monastery, than engaging her mind in worldly concerns. However, she yielded to Mr. Elton's opinion, and Rebecca prepared for her departure.

The meeting between Lady Berry and her young friend was most affecting.

Charlotte Chesterville, without having lost any portion of her native sprightliness, was so touched with the beauty

and mournful interest of Rebecca's appearance, her heart melted into pity and tenderness, when, with faded cheeks and trembling frame, Lady Berry held out her arms to embrace her.

“ My ever dear Charlotte,” she exclaimed, tears flowing from her eyes, “ the kind participator in your friend's eventful life, how can I sufficiently thank you for coming at such a time, when youth generally flies from the house of mourning, and at the very name of sorrow, the gay heart sickens with despondency ?”

“ My Rebecca shall never despond,” cried Charlotte, trying to smile away her tears ; “ while I may hope to cheer a friend I so entirely love as my dear Lady Berry. If it is not at present the season for gaiety, it shall not be the season of despair — we will hope in the future. Though you no longer find me quite a mad-cap, you will find me in

heart and disposition the same Charlotte Chesterville."

It was settled the two friends should set out for Leicestershire the following day.

Mr. Elton, from a feeling of delicacy, said he would go before them, that every thing at Westwood Park might be ready for their reception; but arranged so kindly the plan of Rebecca's journey, she had no care or difficulty on the road.

She took an affectionate leave of the abbot and prioress, whose earnest and pious benediction was graciously bestowed.

The gloom and seclusion of a monastery did not accord with the lively disposition of Charlotte Chesterville, and she was glad once more to emerge into the world.

They journeyed by easy stages through the most fertile and beautiful parts of Gloucester and Worcestershire, till they came into the more flat scenery of Lei-

cestershire. The country was glowing in all the rich luxuriance of summer. Every hedgerow breathed odours from the profusion of wild flowers which bloomed on the road-side. The verdant pastures were grouped with peasantry, employed in making hay; and their rustic voices often broke on the stillness of the morning in some rude roundelay. The sun, cloudless and bright, shone in many a verdant glade and sloping bank, bounding the meandering river, over which was thrown an ancient bridge, while the numberless windmills, which always blend in the landscape of a flat country, had quite a novel appearance to Rebecca.

Mr. Elton had faithfully fulfilled his promise. Rebecca found the old-fashioned mansion not only habitable but comfortable, and well aired. Here another trial awaited her. She had come to the paternal home of Sir John Berry, who now slept in his grave. The voice

which was wont to cheer her was for ever hushed. Every room was solitary and deserted ; no person was there to bid her welcome ; for Mr. Elton could not usurp the privilege that alone belonged to a husband, and forbore to appear, having taken up his lodging at a small inn in the neighbourhood.

A respectable elderly woman met Rebecca at the hall door, and humbly curtsyng, begged to show Her Ladyship the way to the library, which she said Mr. Elton thought the most cheerful of the apartments. He had considerably selected the library, as having the least desolate appearance, being well furnished with books, and ornamented with fine sculpture ; for Sir John's father was a man of taste and science : hence his son inherited some portion of his acquirements, though his military life had afforded little leisure in the young man of study ; but a fondness for poetry had

shown itself in several instances, in making Rebecca his votary.

As Rebecca surveyed the house, which gave the promise of so much bliss in every surrounding object, which seemed to bespeak love, peace, and harmony, her bursting heart found relief in a flood of tears, as she hung on the arm of her young friend for support.

“Methinks,” she faintly exclaimed, “I see the shade of my departed husband in all around — every thing speaks and breathes of him. ’Twas in this room he sat — with these books conversed — in these shady walks he loved to meditate.

“Oh, blessed spirit!” she with fervour continued, “look down upon your widowed, your disconsolate Rebecca,” (sinking on her knees before a portrait of Sir John Berry over the mantle-piece), “and may thy beatified spirit watch over, guide, and protect her.

“Observe, dear Charlotte,” she added,

pointing to the picture, "with what a benignant smile he seems now to regard me. Just so he looked, when fondly he clasped me to his heart, which beats no longer. Oh, I could gaze on that sweet resemblance of all that was good and great, till I could almost fancy the inanimate canvass breathed and spoke ; for here he lives again before me."

Charlotte Chesterville, who began to be alarmed at the high-wrought feelings of Rebecca, said, with a half smile, "This will never do, my precious friend. You must suffer me to lead you hence, or I shall have my care of you called in question."

"Observe," she proceeded, "what a lovely scene lies before us of sweeping woods, verdant lawns, and flowery banks; let us taste the fragrant air, for it breathes only peace and freshness."

Rebecca, sensible of Charlotte's kindness, severely chid herself for giving way

the intelligence of her grief, and as
 much as her situation.

The aspect and interest of the evening
 was increased by their remaining not only
 some of the domestic attendants, but of the
 the presence of a Turkish temple, which
 immediately hung in the border of a
 high winding stream. Shaded by trees,
 whose branches waved over it in gentle
 breeze.

In the position requested spot the
 two friends spent the evening together.

Mr. Elton, at a late hour to fill up his
 evening as a solitary man, had wandered
 from the adjacent village, through bye
 ways and by paths, he came to
 the very spot through which private walks
 were made, in which the friends were
 seated.

Coming with confusion and surprise
 he was surprised in an intrusion so un-
 expected and was proceeding, when Re-
 nard, in her soft persuasive voice, in-
 vited him to partake of the fruit set

before them ; with an air of embarrassment, but pleasure, he accepted the invitation.

Rebecca, pure and innocent in mind as in deed, felt no wrong in asking the society of Mr. Elton, for she meant none ; he was the brother of her friend, the son of her lamented benefactors ; nor did she guess the extent of his affection for her. He respected as tenderly as he loved her.

Kindly he bade her good night at the door of her mansion, saying, he would see her at twelve the day following, to make her acquainted with some of her tenants, and to introduce the rector.

Charlotte Chesterville shared the same apartment with Rebecca ; and on the bosom of her tender friend she was lulled to rest.

CHAP. III.

IN a few days Rebecca became so fond of Westwood, she determined to make it her future home. She even began to form arrangements with Mr. Elton for that purpose, in the settlement of her affairs. She was certain Mrs. Chester-ville would allow Charlotte to remain with her some time longer, as her youthful society insensibly had cheered and consoled her. Her former flippancy was now chastened by her good sense ; her mind was finely regulated, and her temper so serene, yet cheerful, no companion could have proved so suited to the sober sadness of Rebecca.

Lady Berry's recent state of widowhood precluded all visitors ; but many were the kind enquiries of the neighbouring gentry ; for she was come to a

part of the country where the late baronet's family had, for centuries, lived in the highest respect and estimation. Curiosity and interest was warmly, nay, anxiously excited towards Rebecca; her beauty, meek, pensive demeanour, recent affliction, created no common interest. The only place at which she had been seen was the small country church at ———, in the family pew belonging to the Berrys; yet it was like some fair vision, enveloped in a shadowy cloud, for her lovely face was concealed by her long flowing veil, blending with her sable garments. Her slender, graceful figure, meekly bent in sorrow, might have personified that of resignation, with her arms folded across her bosom, and her dark blue eyes cast down in tearful sorrow, as she was supported to her seat by the tender Charlotte, whose natural vivacity was subdued by a look of the tenderest solicitude, and whose lively eyes now shone only with watchful tenderness.

The aisles were thronged with the congregation, who stood with respect and courtesy, as she passed along after the service. The young, the middle-aged, the grey-headed, doff their hats; and every one seemed inclined to say, "God bless thee!"

Tears of gratitude, of humility, of thankfulness, sprang to Rebecca's eyes as she complacently regarded these simple, unsophisticated people. She was proud of such a tribute of respect; sensible it was paid to the relic of Sir John Berry, and gratified by such an honourable distinction to his memory.

Rebecca began to devote a portion of her time in visiting the poor, administering to their necessities, distributing money for their use, and greatly ameliorating their sufferings. She daily perceived the happy effect of her bounty amongst them; and it was one of her greatest pleasures, accompanied by Charlotte Chesterville, to go from cottage to cottage, and look

into their condition and relieve their wants. Nothing could tend more effectually to soothe and restore Rebecca's spirits to a certain tone of cheerfulness than a consciousness of having been enabled to relieve the wants of her fellow-creatures. If Rebecca was not happy, she had no rebukes of conscience from having failed in those duties of life required from all who are never more or less without the ability to administer to others.

She beheld thankful contentment spread over the faces of those to whom she had become as a benevolent angel.

Squalid wretchedness gradually disappeared; plain, homely cleanliness reigned in every cottage. The women, the children became industrious in making lace, the employment of females in Leicestershire; and the mills went actively round. Rebecca's days, in early youth, had been too constantly occupied to admit of squandering time like

many idle fine ladies. She did nothing beneath the proper calling of her now exalted sphere; and showed an excellent example of constant useful employment in those various pursuits which ultimately tended to the good and happiness of others.

Thus passed a year of her life at ——— daily becoming more attached to the place. She moved in every spot around her with a sentiment of respect and affection, mingled with fond regret towards her departed husband, who, with such tender consideration had endeavoured, not only to preserve her consequence, but enjoyment, by wishing her to reside at Westwood; and she felt it particularly endeared, not merely on that account, but as having been the place of his birth, the happy scene of his childhood, and his paternal home. Hence, every idea of tenderness and respect was here peculiarly associated with her lamented husband.

CHAP. IV.

THE sombre season of autumn, with all its hues of richly variegated shades, had begun to blend with the fading landscape, and Rebecca had been prevailed on to accompany Charlotte Chesterville back to Liverpool on a visit to her friends, when her plans were painfully disconcerted by a letter from Abbot Lawrence, who always seemed to her to be the messenger of evil tidings.

He informed Lady Berry, his niece the prioress lay dangerously ill of a fever; that in her delirium she constantly raved about her, and entreated her ladyship would hasten to Bristol without delay.

Rebecca, shocked and afflicted, immediately prepared to obey the summons.

Instead of taking Miss Chesterville

home, she was to accompany Rebecca to Bristol, and take up her abode with Lady Berry for the present in the convent, to which she somewhat reluctantly assented, having a horror for a monastic life.

Mournful to Rebecca proved the hour of her departure from Westwood. If she had not tasted perfect bliss during the year passed in the lovely seclusion of Leicestershire, she had lived at least in tranquillity amidst those scenes which became endeared from so many tender and melancholy associations; and though deprived of those close ties which render existence precious, she experienced comparative happiness from the consciousness that she had contributed to the enjoyment and comfort of many of her fellow-creatures, and that she was respected and beloved in a spot to which she was now, perhaps, going to bid a final adieu.

The drooping flowers, the fading

leaves, bore semblance to her own fate. She was the fair flower whose blossoms of hope were blighted when fast growing to perfection. The aspect of her future days was become sombre as the darkening shades of approaching winter, when the sun would withdraw its gladdening rays; for there was no sunshine in the coming years of Rebecca's life. She lost in Sir John Berry the husband of her choice — the idol of her affection. Her every thought was blended with his departed shade, and her heart seemed as if it would never more open to joy.

True, she entertained the most perfect friendship and regard for Constance, but their joys, their sorrows, no longer, as formerly, mingled together. The absence of confidence insensibly weans affection; and Rebecca, who could not build her joys beneath the austere gloom of a monastery, fond as she was of seclusion, rather imposed a duty on herself on the present occasion, in entirely devoting herself to

the prioress. Beside, she was throwing herself in Mr. Elton's way, and reviving a tenderness in his bosom which she wished to quell ; for her's was cold and indifferent, and she viewed the world and all around her with unconcern.

The fever which had seized the prioress was abated before Lady Berry's arrival ; and she had the satisfaction to find her on the recovery. Rebecca's unceasing attention proved most salutary ; but her weak frame had sustained a shock from the severity of the disease which it could not baffle ; and at length it was determined, by the advice of her physicians, she should visit some sisters of the order of the Virgin, at Bradstow, now Broadstairs, in the Isle of Thanet, for the benefit of sea-bathing.

The feast of the Invocation of the Holy Cross, which was to be celebrated on the 3d of May with great solemnity, determined the prioress to be present on the

occasion, that she might pour forth her thanks to the Almighty for her restoration.

The two friends embarked on board a small packet for Broadstairs. When almost within sight of land, a sudden squall arose, which rendered it impossible to reach the port; and the master bearing out far to sea, after a most perilous and tempestuous voyage of two days, they were put ashore at the small fishing-town of Whitby, in Yorkshire, instead of Broadstairs.

Once more in the north of England, Rebecca fancied herself at home. The wild sterility of the scenery was familiar to her eye. With it was associated a thousand tender, a thousand painful recollections; and, as she gazed on the surrounding hills, tears flowed from her eyes, for she viewed them like old acquaintances.

They were now within a day's journey of York, which city the prioress intended visiting, that she might view the sublime

Minster, and spend a few days with some friends in the neighbourhood.

When Rebecca again beheld the river Ouse, her heart seemed to recoil from its limpid waves; and though she did not know the exact tract of country where Selby was situated, yet she thought of her early humble friends, Michael Barton and his wife, and their meek and pure spirits seemed to hover over her as she bestowed a sigh and tear to their memory.

She fancied that not far distant might dwell her parents. Ah! with them what tenderness was associated! — and she determined to travel from one part of Yorkshire to the other in the fond hope of discovering and seeing them.

CHAP. V.

EVERY tract of land now became familiar to Rebecca, as they travelled towards York. She determined, on their arrival in that city, to leave the prioress with her friends, and proceed along the banks of the Ouse, till she came to Selby, which she felt certain could not be far distant from Gloomore Castle.

When they were within two stages of York, Rebecca's eyes, with searching anxiety, rested on every object likely to revive some recollection of the spot which she sought; one of the wheels of the carriage came off, and they were obliged to halt within a hundred yards of a substantial-looking farm-house, which stood within a green pasture looking on the road-side.

A man, leading a hay-cart, stopped on

observing the accident, and good-naturedly offered his assistance.

“You be ladies in a bad plight,” he said; “it might have proved an ugly accident. I will get you help; we have plenty of hands at Green Meadows-bank; and if you will be pleased to come along with me to father’s, where you will be main welcome to rest yourselves, the chaise will soon be set to rights.”

Lady Berry and the prioress did not refuse the young man’s offer. He desired the post-boy to remain where he was till he came back, and then offered his services to the ladies.

The farmer had a comely, open countenance; and, though he spoke in the broad Yorkshire dialect, there was something so kind and obliging in his manner, Rebecca was quite pleased with the friendliness he showed.

He led them through a gate into a broad cart-road, from which they immediately branched off into a narrow path,

across a beautiful meadow covered with sheep and cattle, and conducted towards the house. Rebecca's ear caught, as they proceeded, the wild tones of a melodious voice warbling a song, and she beheld a young woman seated with her pail in the act of milking.

Delighted in witnessing this rural occupation, she came beside the young woman, who, bashful, and unused to strangers, coloured in confusion, and in a moment her face and neck became scarlet, as she hastily turned her head aside to conceal her embarrassment. She had passed the early bloom of girlish loveliness, and appeared to be about thirty. Her soft dove-like eyes beamed with sweetness ; and there was such goodness portrayed in the expression of her fine ruddy countenance, Rebecca could not resist addressing her.

"Your occupation, young woman," she exclaimed, "seems to be fraught with health and enjoyment, for it beams

in your face. Your's is a life as si
as it appears to be happy."

"Yes, good Madam," she replied,
ing her eyes down, "you say true.
father and mother are so kind to u
God blesses our endeavours, if we d
duty."

"Sister Ruth," interrupted the y
man, "if you can leave off your mi
just for a minute, I wish you woul
to the house, and tell mother two str
ladies would be glad to rest them
for a while, having met with an acci
and ask her to put some refreshme
the table."

"That I will," replied Ruth, ea
"mother will do her best, I am su
the stranger ladies will excuse our h
fare."

Away flew Ruth, with her fair t
floating in the wind, and was o
sight in a minute.

Rebecca's eyes followed her with
ing which she could not define. The

of Ruth seemed to vibrate on her heart, as one which she had fondly lisped in her first feeble attempt to give sound articulation. She was also greatly struck with the sweetness of her countenance and natural, kind manner; the tears sprang to her eyes, as she anxiously surveyed her and every surrounding object.

If such was the impression the young woman made upon Rebecca, neither had the prioress been an idle spectator of the scene; but she kept to herself, for the present, the idea that floated in her mind, of the resemblance which she bore to Lady Berry, which she could not think was altogether accidental. True, she apparently was her senior by twelve or fourteen years, yet still their countenances were alike. The same dove-like expression of eyes, only that Rebecca's had more intelligence and brilliancy in their expression. The contour of their faces was the same; the same glossy, fair curling hair; the same soft voice, except

that Rebecca's was more modulated by education ; yet they were of the same tender, silvery tone, which seemed to breathe from the same source.

The young man also, though sun-burnt, and fresh-coloured, had a sort of family resemblance to Lady Berry.

There was a rural repose about Green Meadows that delighted Rebecca, as they advanced towards the house, which they entered by a low rustic porch, over which the honeysuckle flowered in fragrant luxuriance. Over the old walls spread several fruit-trees, partially shading the heavy-latticed windows. To the left spread a considerable farm, well stocked with all its various produce, and bespoke peace and plenty.

When they reached the house, a most respectable-looking, plain-drest, matronly woman advanced from the porch ; and, as she curtsied to them, said with benignant kindness, " You be welcome, respected Madams, to rest at Green

Meadows; quite welcome. Pray don't hurry yourselves, for there is a small, neat parlour to yourselves; do let me show you the way."

The dame, as she proceeded, more than once turned her head back, looking so earnestly at Rebecca, she was quite distressed.

"I ask your pardon, Madam," said the dame, "and beg you will excuse my freedom; I don't mean to be rude, but somehow, sweet lady, you are so like my daughter Ruth, I cannot take my eyes off you.

"You saw Ruth, Madam," addressing the prioress, "Isn't there a likeness?"

The prioress answered, "They are both fair, and both pretty."

"This young Madam is beautifuller than Ruth; but if my observation is not too bold, they might be taken for sisters. I hope," she continued, turning to Lady Berry, "you won't be offended, Madam,

at my likening you to Farmer Russell's daughter."

Rebecca heard not — saw not — she gave a shriek, and would have fallen senseless to the ground, if the prioress had not caught her in her arms.

"I hope I have said no wrong," exclaimed the affrighted woman, as she loudly called to Ruth to bring water, to restore the fainting lady.

She assisted the prioress in carrying the still senseless Rebecca to the settle, on which they placed her.

After a considerable time she revived, wildly gazing around her; at length, eagerly grasping the hand of the good woman, and throwing her arms round her neck, she faintly articulated the tender, touching name of — Mother!

"The poor lady," said Mistress Russell, anxiously regarding her, "is not, I am afraid, in her right mind; has she lost her mother, seeing she is in black, and taken me for her?"

"Yes, oh! yes," Rebecca cried with emotion, "I had indeed lost my mother — for ever lost her, unknown — unheard of — in vain I have searched — in vain articulated a name so tender — none answered to the call; but now, in you, I feel that I am folded to her bosom. Your name at once," added the weeping Rebecca, "will clear all doubts — tell me, are you called Russell? Had you ever a daughter Rebecca?"

"Had I?" interrupted the woman, with eager transport; "in good sooth I had — never was born a prettier, dearer child; but she was some how spirited away from us by that wicked magician, Sir Ambrose Templeton. Sore was it to part with our little darling; and sore has been our grief since that unlucky day. Whether he kept her under his enchantment, or has spirited her away, the poor master nor me could never find out.

"If, indeed," she proceeded, tenderly examining Lady Berry's countenance,

"it is the will of God to restore our child, and I may trust my eyes that this beautiful and noble-looking lady is our daughter Rebecca, the master as well as me will be beside himself with joy."

"I am your own, your long-lost child Rebecca," exclaimed she, fondly hanging on her bosom. "Oh, my mother, take me to your heart — let me feel its tender throbbings. Bless your long-lost daughter — say that you love and own her."

"Will you," replied Mistress Russell, somewhat encouraged, "own so poor a body as Farmer Russell's wife for your mother? and not look down upon us, sweet young lady."

"Am I not your child?" replied Rebecca, with tender ardour. "Oh, think not so meanly of me — can any station alter natural affection! or snap the stem from which we grow, or tear the tender blossom from its parent tree? — oh, never — never!"

"Sweet lady," cried she, sobbing

aloud, "your words quite melt me — my old heart cannot contain its overpowering feelings." Rebecca tenderly embraced her.

Ruth, who now joined the group, stood in amazement, unable to comprehend what the scene could mean.

Rebecca, disengaging herself from her mother's embrace, saluting her, exclaimed, "Dear sister of my heart, who, in infancy, so often bore me in your arms, oh, now again receive your long-lost, ever-loved Rebecca.

"But where," she continued, "is my father and brothers?—send them hither; for, great as is my present bliss, how incomplete it proves while they are absent."

The venerable father of his family, who now returned home from the labours of the day, came into the hall to partake of the evening repast, spread on a long table; but, observing two stranger ladies, stopped short, doffed his hat, and, making a rude bow, was retiring, when Rebecca

suddenly sprang forward, and throw herself on her knees before the old man whose benignant eye was fixed on her. In wonder and surprise, he stood speechless, viewing her as some fair spirit come from the nether world, so beautiful and so beatified she appeared.

“You know not then,” Lady Berry exclaimed, “you cannot know my long-lost daughter Rebecca. Oh! dearest, venerable father, bless your child for in me you again behold her—as some wandering fugitive, she comes to claim your affection.”

Farmer Russell, unable to comprehend what all he saw and heard could mean, with eager curiosity cast his eyes first on Rebecca, then his wife, for an explanation.

The old man took Lady Berry's hand and raised her from her kneeling position, anxiously regarding her with wonder and solicitude, he at length exclaimed, “Whether you be or not my daughter Rebecca, God bless thy lovely face. My heart

he added, "somehow yearns towards thee, and flutters like a bird, if I could only be certain so fair a creature was indeed my child, then I could say with the patriarch of old, 'it is enough, for no longer will my grey hairs go down with sorrow to the grave.'

"Tell me, goody," he proceeded, turning to his wife, "how all this has come about; I seem in a dream."

"It is the will of God," replied the Mistress, "to bring back our daughter to us to bless our old age. Look in her face, and you will discern it is our own Rebecca."

Lady Berry fixed her eyes on her father, who silently folded his arms round her, as the tears coursed down his furrowed cheeks; but he could not speak; it was a sort of agonizing joy which robbed him of utterance.

The prioress, afraid Lady Berry would again faint from excess of feeling, proposed her taking some refreshment, and

requested her mother to lead the way, saying they would now gladly accept her proffered hospitality.

The venerable father of his family, with a feeling of bashfulness took Rebecca's hand, as if asking permission for the freedom; for she had such a look of superiority, both her parents seemed to shrink from any familiarity, forgetting at the moment she actually was their child, though with encouraging smiles and speeches she addressed them, and her sister Ruth, who could only look on the lovely stranger with wonder and admiration. With difficulty Lady Berry prevailed on her brother and sister to be seated in her presence. The repast was simple; the old man sanctified it with his blessing, and requested to drink to the health and welcome of his stranger guests.

"By what name am I to call your friend?" asked Rebecca's father. He dismally garb, as does your own, tells some

for sorrow ; some heavy loss you
ffered."

rink, father," returned Rebecca,
e prioress of St. Augustine, who,
ilgrimage for health, now journeys
."

health and comfort to you, pious
he exclaimed, bowing low ; " and
my child Rebecca," he added, fond-
arding her, " I see, by the ring you
are married;" — he paused. " And
w." — She interrupted in a passion-
rst of tears.

oor thing!" cried the old man,
heavy sigh, as he tenderly passed
ugh hand over her cheek.

would learn your husband's name,"
sly enquired her mother, though
of distressing her more.

erry," faintly articulated Rebecca.
r daughter, Lady Berry," said the
ss, " is the widow of Sir John
."

ady — Lady Berry," stammered

out the old man, with a look of something like vexation spreading over his clouded brow, and unconsciously walking to the window.

“ You would have loved my husband, dear father,” she said with quickness as she followed him, “ and I trust you will love the disconsolate, desolate Rebecca. Do I not require a father and mother’s affection to supply my heavy loss?” “ You do — you shall,” interrupted the old man emphatically, as once more he folded her in his arms.

“ I find, daughter Rebecca, I cannot form my speech to call you my lady, though you are not ashamed of farmer Russell for your father. So God bless thee, my child, and may the blessing of both your parents cheer and give comfort to your future days.”

Sweet was the sleep of Rebecca beneath the shelter of her father’s roof. The eyes of her parents once more gazed on her with fondness. Their love was

l m to her afflicted heart, and the fear-
void was now filled up with all that
uld tend to soothe and ameliorate her
af.

CHAP. VI.

THE prioress, anxious to pursue her journey to York, consented to leave Lady Berry with her parents at Green Meadows farm for a few days, at the end of which time she promised to join her at Sir William Widdrington's; his lady was a particular friend of the late Lady Frances Elton's, and on this pilgrimage the prioress was permitted to visit.

Rebecca having, for the present, taken leave of her friend, satisfied the anxiety and impatience of her parents, by briefly relating to them every circumstance of her eventful life, from the time of her separation down to the present hour.

They saw with gratitude the hand of Providence, in having preserved and supported their child in the midst of so many difficulties and trials. They admired

such strength of mind in a creature so young and inexperienced ; and, though they found her returned to them ennobled, they also found her guileless, simple, uncorrupted. Only now restored, after such a lapse of years, and believing her either dead or lost to them for ever, they yet had sufficient good sense to be conscious of the distance which was placed between them, from the high rank their daughter held in society ; and, however painful might be the parting from her again, they urged not her stay beyond the period fixed for her departure.

The intercourse between them had proved tender and endearing. Rebecca had shown them filial respect and affection. She felt it all, and assured her parents her greatest happiness would be to yearly visit Green Meadows farm. She offered to enlarge the farm, and to improve their means of subsistence, which her father positively refused, by saying,

“ We have enough, daughter, quite enough for a comfortable livelihood ; and though I cannot toil as when a young man, I bless God your brother and sister lighten our cares by their industry, and cheer our winter’s fireside by their dutiful care and good humour.”

“ What can we want more ?” he added, patting her cheek. “ Nothing ! now that our child Rebecca is restored to us.”

“ Be it then,” Lady Berry replied, “ as you wish, dear father ; and, since you will have no worldly aid, let me, I pray, share the affection of those children who have not, like me, been useless. Yet believe, you would not have found me backward in my duty, had I been called upon.”

When the day arrived, on which Rebecca was to leave Green Meadows farm, the parting was tender and affecting.

Ruth, who so often had fondled Rebecca in her arms when she was an infant, now,

that she had become more familiarised, hung about her with the most sisterly affection, and folded her with tears to her throbbing bosom ; her father pressed his rough cheek to her's, and her mother took her in her maternal arms.

Farmer Russell accompanied his daughter to the gates of Sir William Widderington's park, and there took leave of her affectionately.

Rebecca found the prioress anxiously awaiting her arrival.

Lady Berry was courteously welcomed by the baronet and his lady, who possessed all the hospitality and cheering kindness of old-fashioned times.

Sir William and his lady were in the habit of usually having their house filled with guests. No sooner did one set of visitors depart, than others came. At present the number was circumscribed on account of the prioress, to whom society proved distasteful, though her

hostess was too well bred to impose any restraint upon her.

The prioress spent her mornings in religious seclusion, but at dinner joined the company.

The perpetual fluctuation of visitors proved rather amusing to Rebecca, from the variety of characters which came under her observation.

Sir William Widderington, in his youth, had been a great fox-hunter, and though now unable to follow the chase with his former activity, he still enjoyed and engaged in the sport ; and most of his associates were gentlemen of that description, with the exception of one of his neighbours, whose abstracted habits and secluded mode of life, seldom led him into any society. For Sir William, however, he entertained a high esteem. They were not merely neighbours, but had been school-fellows ; and, from early associations, a friendship was found-

which remained unshaken, notwithstanding his friend's eccentricities.

During Rebecca's stay at ———, two knights took a morning ride there.

As they drew near Sir William's manor, he said to his friend, "You positively shall go home and dine with us. What, though you have rashly renounced not only all society, but all womankind, for ever, abjure yourself. We have staying with us at present a most bewitching young widow; she is the loveliest creature I ever beheld. She is making a pilgrimage with a prioress of Benedictines, who is permitted to visit for the recovery of her health."

"Thank you, Sir William," he replied, "no man has power to charm me? I thought you bid me worship you, and not make one of the faithless worshippers of my idolatry."

"I continued the good," he said, "do not bid y

make Lady Berry the goddess of your idolatry, but I bid you dine with me; and you cannot be so uncourteous to refuse:" riding quickly towards the park-gates, whither he was conducting him.

"Never turn your back on a neighbour's fare, nor a neighbour's mansion."

His friend, with a frown of discontent, sullenly complied, and let his horse follow the baronet to the stables, where they both dismounted.

The pealing gong announced the dinner. The assembled guests were ushered into the baronial-hall, where the table was spread. Lady Berry took her seat as first in degree beside Lady Widderington, and opposite to her was placed her husband's friend.

Rebecca, bashful, timid, sorrowful, raised not her eyes for some time, unconscious of the appalling, ardent gaze of Sir Ambrose Templeton. His eagle eye met her's; though he spoke not —

moved not — their electric fire struck with horror to her heart.

Rebecca endeavoured to sustain herself from fainting; though she turned deadly pale, trembled, and almost gasped for breath. But as Sir Ambrose either did not actually recognise her, or pretended not, she so far recovered her presence of mind as to keep her seat at table; though more than once Lady Widderington asked if she was ill, requesting she would use no ceremony, and retire if she wished.

To have done so would have been a tacit acknowledgment to Sir Ambrose of recognition. The firmness Lady Berry displayed, not only startled him, but almost made him question the inward conviction that Lady Berry and Rebecca Russell were one and the same person.

Her weeds somewhat altered the expression of her countenance. Her close-eared, plain wimple-cap, the concealment of her beautiful hair, no longer shading

her fair face and forehead, displayed all the deep anguish that furrowed her faded cheek ; and the melancholy drooping of her beautiful large eyes, spread a sadness on her brow ;

“ The temples were transparent, and so white,
That the blue veins ran through like rays of light.”

No dimples played round her mouth ; no smiles chased away her grief ; she was little less than a breathing statue.

Sir Ambrose spoke little ; and what he said was directed towards Sir William Widderington, on general topics.

It so happened, the prioress was not at table. It was a saint's day, and set apart for fasting and penance ; therefore Rebecca had not even her to support and comfort her.

The first course at dinner consisted alone of fish. Sir Ambrose was requested to help Lady Berry from the dish before him. The fish was small, and the whole was sent Rebecca.

Scarcely had she severed it with her fork, when she gave a sudden shriek, and covering her face with both her hands, fell back senseless in her chair. Lady Widderington, and the rest of the company, rose hastily in alarm. Sir Ambrose Templeton rose also, but it was with a look of proud satisfaction and triumph. He had watched the sudden effect and change produced in Lady Berry; and he alone knew the miraculous cause.

The *magic ring* concealed within the fish was found by Rebecca. The fatal promise she had made no power could now avert. Sir Ambrose was in that event her affianced husband, and he now stood before her to claim a promise from which in truth, in honour, she could not recede.

That something extraordinary had happened the company perceived, and stood up with eager curiosity to learn what it might be.

Sir Ambrose now advanced to where Lady Berry sat, and taking from the plate the magic ring, held it up on one of his fingers.

Rebecca, by the aid of hartshorn, slowly recovered, and, on opening her eyes, beheld Sir Ambrose somewhat tenderly and anxiously regarding her ; she rose from her seat, and requested permission to retire.

Sir Ambrose, with a look of reproachful silence, held the ring before her, and said at length, as with an expression of horror she turned away, " Know you this magic ring ? "

" My destiny," she faintly answered, " I find is sealed. At present, Sir Ambrose, in pity intrude not on me, intrude not on my sorrow.

" What I have said," she continued, with an expression of anguish, but with dignity and courage, " I mean not to unsay."

" You are mine, Rebecca," he inter-

rupted with vehemence, “you remember—”

“Alas ! too well ; follow me not now !”

“I will not, — if you will swear —”

“I go not from my vow ; the promise which I made, believe, Sir Ambrose, is most sacred ; though in fulfilling it you will possess the mournful relic of a heartless widow. In Sir John Berry’s grave sleeps all my former happiness.”

“Then for the present I release you ; I know you to be truth itself, and in that truth I now rely.”

Sir Ambrose took her passive marble hand, and, leading her to the door, requested Miss Widderington to take care of Lady Berry to her chamber.

Rebecca, more dead than alive, threw herself on the bed, and, giving way to a burst of anguish, which tears somewhat relieved, she endeavoured to summon strength of mind for support in such a trying moment, to fulfil a promise irrevocable.

When she became composed, she arose, and gently tapt at the prioress's door; on hearing her voice she gave her ready admittance.

She was startled at Rebecca's deadly paleness, with such an expression of fixed despair; she was almost afraid to ask whence it originated?

"Your vows of happiness," she replied in a tone of melting anguish, "point towards that high, that right source, whence alone can spring our only certain promise of felicity. You have chosen the wiser path; neither earthly joy, nor earthly sorrow can ruffle a mind so pure, so untouched by sublunary things."

"To what does all this tend?" asked the prioress, with a look of calm enquiry. "If you are unhappy, seek consolation where you will be sure to find it."

Rebecca briefly related the unexpected meeting with Sir Ambrose Templeton; the extraordinary discovery of the ring;

and her fatal promise to become his wife, if ever it could be produced.

“Cheer you, my daughter,” the prioress answered, in a soothing manner. “Vows, whether made to God or man, cannot be broken; but remember too, only to linger on a few years more in this scene of trial and temptation, and so to act as to merit that endless happiness which is promised to those ‘who patiently continue in well doing.’ ’Tis now,” she proceeded, “your virtue is put to the test; show it will not falter. It is easy to do well when pleasure lies before us; to dally in its flowery paths; enhale its sweets, and idly dream away existence; but ’tis when the storms of life begin to gather, when nought is longer smiling gay before us, we must endeavour to resist with firmness, to endure with strength, to check each wayward passion, and bow with meek submission to the lot ordained us.”

Lady Berry listened with deep atten-

tion, as the prioress continued, "Do not meet Sir Ambrose Templeton with sullenness and frowns. Uncloud your troubled brow ; once a gentle, tender wife, be so again. Take example by our sainted mother ; what she was, do you try to be. Imagine that her blessed spirit now regards you."

"It is enough," eagerly interrupted Rebecca, endeavouring to chase away her tears, as her countenance assumed a look of placid sweetness. "Oh, say no more ; I am quite subdued ; I will try to be all you wish. Wise and profitable are your words, my sister ; they shall not be lost upon me."

The prioress folded Rebecca in her arms ; and, giving her a benediction, desired she would retire and compose herself.

A sweet beam of comfort seemed to gladden Rebecca. The words of the prioress sank deep into her heart. She experienced the efficacy of her advice,

and determined to profit by it. To effect her purpose, she sat down and wrote the following billet to Sir Ambrose Templeton : —

“ Your confidence in me shall not be shaken. Excuse my presence until to-morrow, when I will endeavour to meet you with that cheerfulness and collectedness becoming that new character, in which you will have a claim to those conjugal duties I shall strive to fulfil in a manner to merit your approbation and esteem.

“ REBECCA BERRY.”

Never was greater surprise experienced than when Lady Berry's billet was read by Sir Ambrose Templeton. The angry gloom which sat on his brow was instantly dispelled ; and, though a proud curl of triumph quivered on his lip, yet it yielded to a smile of satisfaction at the concluding line.

As he folded the paper, he exclaimed, "Rebecca, your triumph is great. No more will I think contemptibly of woman, if all indeed resemble you."

Years had elapsed since the baronet had put pen to paper. He snatched up one, and wrote thus to Rebecca : —

"Ill as I think of your sex in general, I make you an exception. I shall, therefore, suffer you to take your own way, placing implicit confidence in your word, which I deem as binding. Now, considering you my betrothed wife, I yield to my destiny, to your destiny, and conclude myself, Rebecca, your's faithfully and wholly,

"AMBROSE TEMPLETON."

Notwithstanding Lady Berry's attempt at composure, she gave an involuntary shudder when she glanced at the words in Sir Ambrose's letter, "*I yield to my
y, to your destiny ;*" for she consi-

dered it impious. Though certainly now doomed, by an extraordinary combination of events, to unite herself to so singular a person as Sir Ambrose Templeton, it required all the fortitude she could collect to bestow her hand on a man who looked not to the events of life as proceeding from a Divine source, but resulting from the effect of predestination, which nothing could avert. Rebecca dared not reflect on a subject so awfully mysterious, but believing that all human foresight was for wiser purposes veiled from our eyes, with meek resignation in the will of heaven she determined to endeavour to act her part as well as human frailty admitted, and humbly trust herself into that hand which alone could guide her right.

CHAP. VII.

MORE than a year having elapsed since Rebecca's widowhood commenced, being so soon to appear in the character of a bride, she judged it a proper compliment to Sir Ambrose Templeton to no longer in person

“ Bear about the mockery of woe ;”

therefore the next morning, when she appeared at breakfast, she had cast off her weeds, and was drest in slight mourning, with her beautiful sunny hair flowing in a thousand ringlets over her face and neck:

Painful was Lady Berry's struggle when Sir Ambrose met her at the door to lead her to a seat, as he took her hand with a smile, which seemed unnatural, and muttered something like a compli-

ment on her change of attire, and the display of those glossy ringlets, no longer confined by a close-eared cap.

Sir William, Lady Widderington, and all the company were now acquainted with Lady Berry's history, and were formally introduced to her as Sir Ambrose's affianced wife.

The prioress also was present, and with looks of kindness gave Rebecca support. When the company withdrew from the breakfast table, Sir Ambrose requested the favour of Rebecca's conversation for a short time ; to refuse was impossible, she therefore remained with much confusion.

Sir Ambrose, now they were alone, laid open his plans respecting their future establishment. He vehemently urged their immediate union, and aware that, from many painful associations, Gloomore Castle could not prove to Lady Berry a desirable residence; he did not even name it as their future house ; but told her it

was his intention to proceed from York, where they were to be married, to London, and introduce her to such society as was suitable to her rank.

To this plan Rebecca gratefully acceded. On one point, however, they differed, and to which, with resolute firmness, she would not comply. He proposed her dropping the name of Berry, and relinquishing the estates appertaining to the name, rather than not assume his own. It was a name precious to her as the air she breathed; it had been interwoven with the only perfect happiness she had ever tasted. Though not of a sordid nor selfish nature, yet, as the patrimony bestowed upon her by the man she so fondly loved, to abandon it was impossible. It was the tender link which, even in death, seemed yet to bind them together; its very sound was full of that departed love which cherished the fondest remembrance.

By preserving the name she could alone retain the Leicestershire estate, that beautiful place where all her former joys were buried. In the event of resigning her name her property became forfeited. Rebecca promised to marry Sir Ambrose Templeton, and she meant to keep her word; but conscious he had no further claim upon her than as regarded that promise, she remained unshaken respecting a change of name, and he was obliged to yield to her determination, having drawn from her an assurance that she never would visit Westwood Park during his life-time.

The next step Rebecca took was to inform her parents of her intended marriage; she knew the horror it would inspire, for they not only held Sir Ambrose in detestation, but dread. They looked upon him as some malignant being, instigated by an evil spirit. Simple and uneducated, they were weak and superstitious, and from their knowledge of

Sir Ambrose, nothing she was persuaded could convince them, that he was not either a necromancer, or under the influence of the devil. Rebecca considered it a point of duty to herself to make her parents acquainted with her intended change of condition. For that purpose she set out for Green Meadows, within two stages of Sir William Widderington's, accompanied only by her maid.

The worthy couple were transported to see their daughter; it was an unlooked-for joy; but bitter was their sorrow, when she revealed to her father that she was on the point of marriage with Sir Ambrose Templeton.

The venerable, white-haired old man knelt to her in the anguish of the moment. "Do not, do not, I pray you, my dear child, cast yourself away — sell yourself to Beelzebub. I am certain sure he is no better. Are not all the country round affrighted at him, with his

conjurations, and worshipping the moon and stars, instead of God Almighty ?

“ Did he not,” he continued, with emotion, “ spirit you away when a mere baby ; and then, as it should seem, spirit you back, by invoking the wicked one, in the most surprising manner — quite a resurrection — when we thought you, years past, dead and buried ?

“ Rebecca, child,” proceeded the old man, with a determined firmness, that seemed at variance with the anguish of of his mind, “ I would rather, I tell you,” as he clenched his hand, “ follow you to the grave, even now that my eyes are again blessed with the sight of you, than you should be the wife of that profane man.

“ What can you expect,” he continued, with vehemence, earnestly looking with tenderness upon her, “ but that he will hurl you into that pit of fire and brimstone, prepared, as we are told, for the devil and his angels.”

Rebecca was quite subdued, and wept on the breast of her parent, unable to speak. At length she said, in a low voice, "Father, dear father, talk not thus, I implore you; for I have promised, by a solemn vow, which cannot be recalled, to marry Sir Ambrose Templeton. You must, therefore, try to reconcile yourself to an event which must take place, and that immediately."

"More's the sorrow," he returned, in a tone of vexation, as he flung himself from her on the window-seat, in sullen grief. "Well, child," he added, after a considerable pause, taking Rebecca in his arms, "as what cannot be cured, as the saying goes, must be endured, take a father's blessing, though it is a sorrowful one. May God bless and protect you from the evil one. I cannot tell your poor mother your design, for it would go hard with her to break her heart."

The old man again fondly prest Rebecca to his breast; and, as the large

drops fell from his eyes, with a convulsive sob, he rushed from her presence.

Rebecca, quite overcome for some time, remained almost stupified with sorrow. Farmer Russell prevented her mother from seeing her; and at length she was attended by her sister Ruth to the carriage which had brought her to Green Meadows-bank, of which she took a painful farewell.

CHAP. VIII.

LADY Berry having given her consent to marry Sir Ambrose, and, above all little female affectation, allowed him to name the following Thursday for the celebration of their nuptials.

The ceremony was performed by the dean, in the cathedral at York, in the presence of all the Widderington family. Sir William gave away the bride; and his daughter, a pretty blooming girl, officiated as bridesmaid.

They returned, after the ceremony, to Sir William's seat, where a splendid entertainment was provided.

The following day, the prioress took an affectionate leave of her friend, and proceeded to Bristol, and the new-married couple set off for the mansion of Sir Ambrose, in the immediate neighbour-

hood of Whitehall, in the west-end of London.

As Rebecca journeyed southward, a thousand tender, mournful recollections crowded upon her, and almost forced tears from her eyes, though she tried to smile them away. Sir Ambrose was so kind, so entertaining in his conversation, pointing out every object worthy of remark, of antiquity, with its history and origin.

The low-born Rebecca, the child of his early bounty, the creature whom the evil spirit had once so wickedly instigated to destroy, had singularly become his wife. To exalt her, as much as he formerly had attempted to annihilate her, was now his highest aim. To improve her mind, and form her manners, with her quick capacity and docile disposition, he foresaw would be a pleasing task ; and to effect it, was only to introduce Rebecca amongst the assemblage of illustrious personages, whose courtly graces,

wit, and talents so eminently distinguished that era.

As Rebecca's reserve insensibly wore off, Sir Ambrose was not less delighted than surprised to find how much knowledge she had acquired in languages, literature, and female accomplishments, which had not spoiled her artless manners and native simplicity of character. He thought no woman devoid of art; nor did he believe that truth and candour were natural virtues, until he knew Rebecca.

Sir Ambrose's manners also relaxed into more courtesy; he was less morose, less abrupt, and contradictory. If he did not praise his wife, he showed that he approved whatever she said or did. Thus, by encouraging, instead of depressing her, she was less timid, and had more self-possession.

In this happy manner they travelled by easy stages to London.

As they entered the great metropolis,

Rebecca scarcely recognised it as the same city she formerly had visited with the Chesterville family. When they proceeded along the Strand towards Charing-cross, and drove past Whitehall, where every thing wore such a courtly aspect, it appeared the very centre of fashion, gaiety, and elegance.

They were set down at a very handsome mansion, with a large parterre before it, filled with a profusion of flowers. The windows looked into St. James's Park, whose long avenues of noble, stately trees, broad gravel walks, unruffled piece of water, and verdant green sward, with the venerable grey towers of Westminster Abbey rising between the opening of the trees, with the grand imposing music of the military band, then playing with its long-sounding drum, tinkling cymbals, tossed gracefully by the blacks, dressed in their high snowy turbans and gorgeous uniforms, made altogether a scene so imposing and delightful, Rebecca was almost

inclined to enquire what part of the metropolis she had formerly inhabited ; for now she saw no long, narrow, close streets, with buildings crowding one upon another, where she could scarcely breathe the air, and where were the busy, bustling faces, which wore such a look of anxiety and care. All the persons she now saw seemed to be loitering about, either for pleasure or in quest of amusement ; some were standing idly conversing, others indolently lolling on benches beneath the cool shade of the trees ; and those who were walking appeared not as passengers on business.

Rebecca was in truth transported into a new world. She could scarcely believe the splendid mansion into which she stepped she was to command for her own, as she surveyed the costly furniture, and the tasteful arrangement of every thing for use as well as ornament.

Sir Ambrose had been lucky in obtaining the house by the sudden death of a

lady of quality, its late possessor. His agent bargained for it as it stood, including the furniture, and the compact was speedily settled.

Novelty, to young persons of vivid imaginations, is always accompanied with the happiest sense of enjoyment. For it not only views all the eye takes in with peculiar delight, but it tinges every thing around with a brighter colouring than the reality actually possesses. Hence it would be almost cruel to destroy the innocent, pure enjoyment, if not too much bordering on romantic enthusiasm, when life is so replete with bitterness and disappointment.

Rebecca almost wished for some of her young female friends, who would have participated in her admiration of all around; for to Sir Ambrose she was timid of expressing what she felt. He had not, however, been an indifferent spectator; and said, with a half-smile of complacency, "I perceive you like our

new residence. If you are not happy, it shall not be my fault. I am glad to find London will not prove displeasing to you."

"That it cannot," Rebecca replied, warmly pressing Sir Ambrose's hand; "I should indeed be ungrateful not to feel more than pleased, when surrounded by all that appears so delightful. What a scene of gaiety this park presents."

"In fact," he returned, "it often proves so. This spot may almost be said to be the centre of the court, or its leading pathway. It is not unusual to see our merry monarch ambulating here, with one or other of his facetious, witty courtiers. But more of him anon."

The establishment of Sir Ambrose's household was numerous, and suitable in all respects to his rank and handsome fortune.

Rebecca's sudden change of condition had not, as yet, been communicated to

her motherly friend, Mrs. Chesterville. The speed with which every thing was concluded, together with the hurry and agitation of her spirits, prevented Lady Berry's writing into Lancashire. She also was withheld from another motive, until the ceremony had taken place. Sensible that her promise to become the wife of Sir Ambrose Templeton, in case the ring should ever be found, would only distress her friends when such an event was actually to take place, she dreaded their interference and endeavours to prevent the fulfilment of a vow which they might consider could not be binding. But as Rebecca had so solemnly pledged herself to be his wife, so did she solemnly resolve to accomplish that promise. When the ceremony was passed, they, like her humble parents, must be reconciled to the event.

She now took up the pen, and wrote to Mrs. Chesterville as follows :—

“ To Mrs. Chesterville.

“ London, 16—.

“ You will, I am afraid, my dear respected Mrs. Chesterville, chide your Rebecca for want of friendship and confidence, that I had not earlier communicated my change of condition. Yet impute not want of deference to your advice, that I have, till now, withheld the intelligence that I am the wife of Sir Ambrose Templeton.

“ You witnessed the condition on which I gave my promise. The *Ring*, consigned to the ocean, by a seeming miracle was found as *predicted*; therefore, nothing but an act of impiety could withhold my consent to unite my destiny with that of Sir Ambrose.

“ Such being the case, I would not put it in your power to dissuade me from an act which, not to have acceded to, would have been most dishonourable.

“ Acquit me then, dear Mrs. Chester-

ville, of disrespect to a friend I so entirely love and respect.

"I have hitherto no reason to regret my change of condition. Sir Ambrose is affectionate and indulgent.

"We have a magnificent mansion in what is called the court-end of the town — quite a different-looking part to where I was with you. Indeed, it is a new world to the simple, ignorant Rebecca, who, it seems, is soon to be introduced to all that polished circle that flutters round the throne of our gay monarch. I am afraid I shall make but a silly figure in the midst of all the handsome, courtly dames by whom Charles is surrounded. They will laugh and sneer at the awkward country bumpkin. But if Sir Ambrose does not blush for his wife, I shall then carry my head as high as the proudest.

"I write to my dear Juliet by the same post.

"God bless you, my kind, respected

Mrs. Chesterville, and your most excellent husband.

“Yours, with respect and truth,

“REBECCA BERRY.”

Sir Ambrose Templeton spared no expence for the fashionable and handsome equipment of his wife. He presented her with a splendid set of pearls, and his equipage was one of the finest in town.

CHAP. IX.

SIR Ambrose Templeton aspired to the acquaintance of Lady Cordelia Trevillion for Rebecca, as the most brilliant, accomplished, and polished woman of the age. Her wit, her vivacity, her attainments, while they inspired envy, yet made her universally talked of, followed, and admired. Though somewhat difficult of access, her doors were open to all that constellation of talent which blazed round the Court of Charles the Second. Not even the reigning favourites of that Court ranked more high in popularity and fashion, than this captivating woman.

Pre-eminently gifted with attractions the most powerful, she had only to appear, to draw around her a crowd of admirers. It was not her beauty, for she certainly was not beautiful ; but it

was that *tout ensemble* there is no defining, which taking the heart, the senses by surprise, rendered captive all those who came within the influence of her magic circle.

Lady Cordelia Trevillion and Sir Ambrose had made an accidental acquaintance in the country, a sufficient sanction, he considered, for now introducing to her his lady.

Accordingly, a few days after their arrival in London, they drove to the Lady Cordelia's splendid mansion at Whitehall.

On being announced, Sir Ambrose and Lady Berry were immediately admitted.

Rebecca's knowledge of life was very limited ; and her little world and opinions were formed within the narrow circle of those with whom she had associated. She believed her late friend, Lady Frances Elton, had reached the very standard of perfection in all that was elegant, accomplished, and excellent in woman,

until the present moment, when she felt dazzled, surprised, abashed. Had her fancy created such a being as she now beheld, she would have smiled at a vision so unlike any thing she had ever before seen, or ever could see again.

Lady Cordelia's manners, wit, vivacity, and conversation, partook of all the grace, ease, and flattery of a court, beneath whose adulation she had always lived : she was allied to the highest of its nobility. Though sincerity and truth guided whatever she said, from a native frankness of character, yet her language was so complimentary and conciliating, her manners so caressing, Rebecca coloured with confusion, and became embarrassed and distressed.

Sir Ambrose presented his wife, Lady Berry, and, half aside, explained why she bore not the name of Templeton.

The Lady Cordelia gracefully held out her hand to bid Rebecca welcome, but she instantly withdrew it in timid confusion,

as she said in her soft wooing voice, smiling upon her, "I am but too happy to see you here. It is kind in Sir Ambrose to bring one so new, and so pretty. Though I doubt whether one-half of the court of Charles will feel equally his debtor.

"Don't you think so?" added the Lady, familiarly addressing a young person, who was employed at the table copying some MS. papers.

Sir Ambrose, half smiling, but not quite pleased, replied, "Lady, you will spoil my simple, unsophisticated wife with compliments to which she is quite unused."

"Oh no," she answered again in her winning way, taking Lady Berry's hand, "you do not think so; I cannot spoil her; I am sure I cannot," earnestly regarding her with tender interest, as she fixed her large beautiful eyes upon her.

Whatever might be Sir Ambrose's opinion as to the unspoilable qualities of his

wife, he confined it to a dubious twitch of the tassels of his collar, and an involuntary glance at the palace window, opposite to which he was standing.

The Lady Cordelia, who did not see, or who did not choose to notice those evolutions, exclaimed, "Oh no! who would be so barbarous as to spoil any thing half so beautiful; it would be too cruel." When, as if to give a practical refutation to her assertion, the door opened, and the Duke of Buckingham was announced, whose eyes, as he bowed to Lady Cordelia, did their best to flatter Lady Berry. The dislike Sir Ambrose would have felt to the gay Duke's acquaintance, was quite overcome by the veneration he entertained for the man who had nearly arrived at a successful conclusion of his pursuit of the philosopher's stone; and Buckingham, on his part, as soon as he discovered the baronet to be the spouse of the beautiful Lady Berry, was not long in exerting all

his alchymy of manner to gild his failings with the husband, for the sake of gaining some golden opportunities of ingratiating himself with the wife ; and so nicely did he analyze the astrologer's character, and so judiciously did he humour his foibles, and put him upon his hobby, that, in the first quarter of an hour, the wily Duke ranked as a demigod in the opinion of Sir Ambrose. When he perceived that he was perfectly established in his good graces, he then, and not till then, addressed his conversation to the ladies.

A pause ensued in the conversation, during which Rebecca took a survey of the apartment, as singular in its arrangement as its singular possessor.

The furniture was costly, and of superb materials: the oak wainscoting, adorned with valuable pictures, executed by the most eminent masters ; and in several compartments were arranged handsome bound books.

Before the fire-place lay extended two large pet dogs ; on a velvet cushion slept one of the favourite breed of the reigning monarch, a black, sleek-haired spaniel. Books of every size and description were scattered on a large table, with implements for drawing, and some beautiful sketches of figures, fancifully grouped together, in an unfinished state.

Rebecca next transferred her observation to the owner, who stood at the table in a graceful attitude, turning over some prints ; Sir Ambrose was looking at the Duke ;—her height was just what it should be, neither diminutive nor too tall ; she moved like a sylph, so light, so graceful were all her footsteps ; yet there was a certain dignity of carriage, a loftiness without pride, that marked her of noble birth ; and, though truth and candour were seated on her brow,

“ The brow was queen-like, somewhat proud,
But this seem'd as it were of right allow'd.”

Her complexion was fair ; the contour of her face good, though her features were not cast in that strict line of beauty formed for the chisel. No face so perpetually varied in expression, as mind, words, and thought directed that expression. In her beautiful large dark eyes every feeling of her heart spoke eloquently, was it either to the melting touch of sorrow, or changed into that gay vivacity of character which seemed to be most natural ; her mouth, her smiles, her teeth, were the perfection of loveliness ; her golden hair clustered in ringlets over her fair forehead, unconfined by any head-dress ; in her soft, sweet voice there was witchery.

“ That low tone,
Melting as woman’s love, or pity’s own ;
Like silver tuned to music, or a bird
Gifted with human language, but each word,
As sweet as any note that might belong
To the first murmur of a minstrel’s song.”

it was not the voice alone, it was

the sense, the wit that accompanied all she uttered. But

“ Her likeness, why it is a vain endeavour
To image it, painting or words may never
Say what she was.”

Yet she was not perfect ; high spirited, tender, ardent, frank, sincere, unguided by prudence, she was the creature of impulse and of feeling ; and, from viewing mankind through the medium of her own excellence, she was unguarded where she ought to have been prudent ; unsuspecting where she ought to have been cautious. Whatever failings she possessed, she had not the art to conceal, but, like the deep shadows which blend with the rich colouring of a fine picture, only gave additional lustre to its outline.

Decked by the Graces, they were her hand-maids ; though born and bred in courts, fashion had not spoiled her ; and if she sometimes unwarily caught its insinuating tone, she disdained its artifice.

her heart was meltingly alive to charity; she never heard a tale of distress with indifference; she sought out the object and alleviated its affliction; for the milk of human kindness flowed in her bosom.

Yet a strange weakness in her character often induced her to be most guided, or rather influenced by the counsel of persons whose understandings she most despised, and which were as inferior to her own, as gold ore to brass metal.

“I am come,” said Buckingham, who was the first to break the silence, starting from his reverie, “on the part of Miss Hamilton (who is now at Lady Chesterfield’s, laughing most immoderately) to know if Lady Cordelia Trevillion will go there, and hear of two of the best jokes that ever were played off on two people, whose destiny appears to be that of being laughed at, and most amply have they fulfilled it.”

“Tell me who the unfortunates are,

that I may know whether it is worth my while to go," said the lady.

"I was told not," said the Duke, "that you might enjoy the jest the more; but your wishes are my laws, and as transgressing them incurs the too severe penalty of your displeasure, I must e'en tell you. What think you of a *parti quarré*, composed of Lady Muskerri, Miss Price, Miss Blague, and the Marquis de Brisacier?"

"Oh delightful," cried Lady Cordelia, "I'll go directly, and Lady Chesterfield too; you *must* go with me," she added, turning to Lady Berry; "she is such a nice woman; I like her; and though the people do laugh at her about her thick ankles, and her green stockings, I'm sure there's no harm in it; *she* can't help having feet like an elephant." And as she spoke, she involuntarily displayed the prettiest little foot in the world. "Come," she continued, taking Lady Berry's hand, "come with me,

will you? while I put on my things; Miss Hamilton and Lady Chesterfield will be so glad to see you."

"But I do not know them," said Rebecca, hesitatingly, "and they may think it odd my going."

At this piece of *naïveté* Lady Cordelia laughed not a little, and then said, "I beg your pardon for laughing, but I cannot help it, you are so unlike your husband. *He* won't allow any thing to be strange, even if the heavens were to fall; and *you*, like my dog Fidel, (who passes his whole life in astonishment at the evolutions of his own tail,) think every thing strange."

"And you the strangest of all," rejoined Lady Berry; "for I have never seen any thing like you."

"Well, never mind, only don't laugh at Lady Chesterfield's fine green stockings."

When Lady Cordelia was equipped, they returned to the saloon, where they found Buckingham and Sir Ambrose

again deeply engaged, gesticulating out their chemical lore at one another. — “No doubt the effect of caloric, in that case, would be double,” said Sir Ambrose, as they entered.

“Never mind the effect of caloric,” said Lady Cordelia, who overheard this last sentence, “but let us make haste and hear the effect of Miss Hamilton’s joke; for I am dying to know what it is.”

They had not twenty yards to walk to Lady Chesterfield’s house, where there soon occurred fresh matter for surprise to Lady Berry, and mirth to Lady Cordelia.

They were ushered into a handsome suite of rooms; in which, however, they did not wait long, before a page entered, to beg they would follow him to his lady’s dressing-room. They passed through two or three rooms, and, when arrived at the last, the page threw open a door.

Lady Berry was not a little surprised to find that Buckingham and Sir Am-

brose, instead of remaining where they were, also entered.

The room was of oak, and very spacious, the sun streamed along the inlaid floor in prismatic colours, through the high, painted windows. The air was perfumed with the breath of real flowers, that were scattered in profusion round the room, and whose tints were reflected back by innumerable mirrors. At the upper end of the room was an eider-down couch, covered with rose-coloured satin and silver, on which reposed, in unconscious luxury, some half dozen of puppies, with their long-eared mamma. The chairs and foot-stools were of the same material, but resembled in shape the shell-car in which Venus is represented as having risen from the sea. The bath, which stood at one end of the apartment, was a large marble bason, in the centre of which played a fountain of perfumed water, over which a marble Amphitrite presided ; and the floor round the bath

was thickly strewed with rose-leaves, that reached half way up it. The light came with a soft glow through the rose-coloured curtains, and fell lovelily on objects scarcely less brilliant than itself. Before the centre window was a toilet, on which lay, in happy confusion, billets-doux, letters, jewels, rouge, and essences. The glass was in the form of a heart, set in silver, richly chased with flowers, and supported by silver Cupids, who with one hand pointed inward towards the mirror, as if at the face it reflected, whilst the other held a torch, which at night emitted light; the arrows in their quivers were so many silver pens. At one end of the toilet lay a guitar; and on a table near it was a profusion of fruit in silver baskets, with wine and flowers. Before the mirror sat the beautiful green-stockinged Lady Chesterfield. A morning-dress of green lute-string half concealed, half displayed her figure; behind her chair stood an abigail, adjusting the bur-

nished ringlets of her luxuriant hair; and at her feet were a mask and a fan, which a little dog was doing his best to pull to pieces. Whilst by her side sat Francisco Corbetta, a dingy-looking Italian, from whom she was taking a lesson on the guitar, and who was beating time most indefatigably, while she sang.

At the other end of the table sat the lovely Hamilton, with her *petit nez retroussé*, threatening mischief to the whole world in general, and a few individuals in particular; on her lap lay several pairs of military gloves, with a quantity of pale yellow ribbon; and in her hand was one of the before-mentioned silver arrows, speeding her errand of mischief, in the form of a billet-doux, which she was very busily inditing.

Lady Chesterfield ceased singing as Lady Cordelia and Lady Berry entered.

When the latter had presented her fair friend to the former, she sprang forward, and, looking over Miss Hamilton's

shoulder, cried out, "Ah, *petite maligne!* what is it now?"

"Look at these sulphurous streamers," said the beauteous Hamilton, holding up the citron-coloured ribbon in triumph, "and for one moment picture to yourself the *tête-de-veau au naturel* of the insipid Blague, decorated with them; but that is not all; it would be nothing if they were not a *gage d'amour* — so I have taken the liberty of sending an anonymous billet with them, which she will infallibly attribute to the Marquis de Brisacier, who has done as much to turn her brain, as yon noble Duke has," (pointing to Buckingham,) "to turn his; and to decide the matter at once, there are many eulogiums on her *jolis yeux de marcassin*, and a request that she will allow the accompanying happy gloves to kiss the fairest hands in the world; and the ribbon to decorate the most lovely of heads, at the Queen's masquerade next week. But as love is

nothing without jealousy, I am now dispatching a similar present, with a fac-simile of this billet, to Miss Price, as she and the young wild boar's eyes are not only at daggers drawn about Dongan, but are both candidates for the Marquis's admiration, and both equally deserving of it; for if Blague wants the wit of Price, her long white eyelashes give more than equal point to her glances, though I am afraid the Marquis's love is above Price," continued Miss Hamilton, laughing, and looking archly at Lady Cordelia; "but only fancy the volley of indignation that will assail the unconscious Marquis, when each of these damsels find themselves equal participators in his present."

Lady Cordelia was enchanted at the frolic, and laughed immoderately, as her imagination conjured up the resentment of the rival frights and the astonishment of the guiltless Brisacier.

"Oh, keep your laughter for my

chef-d'œuvre," said Miss Hamilton, " which is the trick I have played off on my cousin Muskerry. You know her mania for dancing ; but at all events her Lord does ; and dreading the ridiculous figure she would make in the eyes of the whole world, he entreated the Queen not to send her an order for the masquerade ; but I, taking compassion on her, sent her one about three hours ago, commanding her to appear in the costume of a Babylonian princess ; and not an hour since she was with me in an ecstasy of delight, at not only going to the ball, but cheating her husband into the bargain. She told me she had in vain gone to all the merchants in the town trading to the Levant, to discover how they dressed in Babylon, and asked me if I could inform her. You may be sure I lost no time in instructing her how to attire à la Babylonian ; and therefore you may reckon on her appearance being complete. But now comes the best part

of the story. She had not left me ten minutes before in came Lord Muskerly, to know if there was any ball going to be given in the city; for that his wife was making great preparations for making a fool of herself somewhere; but," added he, "as I have taken care it should not be at Court, I do not much mind."

Whilst the fair quartette were laughing heartily at the poor Princess of Babylon's * expense, Buckingham had retired into a window with Sir Ambrose, where he was inveighing against the degeneracy of the times, as though he had been a saint; and among other enormities, particularly reprobated that very licence of manners which sanctioned their being where they then were. This last piece of appropriate morality completed his conquest of Sir Ambrose, who quitted him with reluctance, when Lady Cordelia rose to depart.

* Vide Count A. Hamilton's Memoirs of the Comte de Gramont.

"Thanks," said Buckingham, in a whisper to Lady Chesterfield, as he passed her, pointing to the mirror on the toilette, "thanks for retaining the effigy of my heart, as well as the original."

"Why the effigy of *your* heart in particular?" asked the Lady.

"Because," replied the Duke, "it reflects *your* image more *constantly* than any other."

"Rather say," said she, "that it is like your heart; because it reflects every form and retains none; and because love is for ever stationed near it, but never enters it."

"I'll not dispute the matter with you," said Buckingham, executing one of his most tender sighs, "for it was so short a time in my possession, and has been so long a one in *yours*, that *you*, who regulate its every movement, ought certainly to know more about it than I do who have not the slightest control over it."

The beauty tossed her pretty head with a laugh, half believing, half incredulous, as the Duke, bowing to Miss Hamilton, left the room to join his party, who had reached the court-yard; and linking his arm within that of Sir Ambrose, with very unusual want of gallantry, left the two ladies to walk by themselves.

"Do many persons associate with Lady Chesterfield?" asked Rebecca, hesitatingly, after they had walked a little way.

"Yes; every body," said Lady Cordelia; "but why?"

"Oh, nothing," replied Lady Berry, "only it was so odd her letting the Duke of Buckingham and Sir Ambrose into her dressing-room."

"There, *odd* again," said Lady Cordelia, laughing, but added with a sigh, "ah! you will soon learn to think nothing odd in this naughty town."

So saying, she arrived at her own

house, where the friends separated, Lady Cordelia promising to call, and take Lady Berry to the theatre in the evening.

Rebecca, in her way home, was lavish in praise and admiration of the Lady Cordelia Trevillion.

“ Women,” Sir Ambrose replied, “ are in general so full of vanity, levity, and folly, that, with the present exception, I scarce know one in the court of our present monarch I would choose for your intimate associate. The great charm of Lady Cordelia consists in her having nothing artificial about her. You see her always in heart, mind, and manners such as she really is, a genuine character.

“ She attempts nothing,” he continued, “ she does not execute to perfection, nor affects any thing she does not understand. She speaks, reads, writes various languages, with the fluency and elegance of a native ; she is celebrated for the taste, pathos, and beauty of her reading ; her music speaks to the heart ;

her painting lives, nay almost breathes on the canvass."

"How ignorant," exclaimed Rebecca, "how unworthy must Lady Cordelia consider me of her acquaintance!"

"Not at all; but in short, Rebecca, she is a most graceful, perfect creature, as far as personal and mental attainments reach. But your sex are not to be trusted; you are capricious, wayward, and fickle."

"Yet, Sir Ambrose, you just said, there is nothing artificial about Lady Cordelia."

"Less so than most women, I agree; for she is often very incautious."

"She is a widow; did you know her husband?"

"No; our acquaintance originated in a whimsical circumstance. In travelling through Yorkshire, she expressed a desire to see my orrery, and Lady Cordelia Trevillion is the only female who ever was admitted within a mansion long closed against all visitors. Delighted

with the science she discovered, I promised, if I came to London, to renew our acquaintance; and am glad of the opportunity of presenting my Rebecca."

Few women, as Sir Ambrose said, can vie with the Lady Cordelia in intellect. The powerful rapidity of her comprehension, on all subjects in which she engages, makes her compass whatever she attempts with a taste and perfection the result of extraordinary genius. That genius is eminently conspicuous in composition, particularly in poetry, which she writes with the beauty, the originality, and true genius of a poet. She paints with the boldness and effect of an artist. In short, she combines all the feminine accomplishments of the lady, with all the attainments of a highly-gifted woman. Hence her talents draw around her the first wit and talent of the age.

It was a brilliant era. The fine arts flourished under the auspices of Mr., afterwards Sir Christopher Wren, the noble

architect of St. Paul's; Dryden, Denham, Butler, the poets; Purcell, the composer, all frequented the mansion of the Lady Cordelia Trevillion, for she loved and appreciated genius of every description, and it was in truth the Temple of Science and the Graces.

The insidious, the fascinating Sir Charles Sedley was not excluded from her magic circle. Lady Cordelia, like all highly-gifted persons, was not insensible to the voice of adulation; from the universal admiration which she inspired, and with the manners herself of a cour-tier, the soft, the insinuating Sir Charles unconsciously pleased her; yet he only pleased her, as a passing gleam of sunshine; for the impression he made was light and frivolous.

The handsome Duke of Buckingham diverted her. His turn for ridicule, his graceful pleasantry, his humourous sayings, and inventive faculty carried her,

in his society, from herself. But he was so generally engrossed with Miss Stewart, it was not often she saw his Grace, except in public.

CHAP. X.

ACCORDING to agreement, Lady Cordelia called for Sir Ambrose and Lady Berry in the evening, to witness the representation of Betterton's Hamlet. She was attended by Sir Charles Sedley.

Rebecca was surprised, after they entered the box, to see Lady Cordelia put on her vizard mask*, as did all the ladies of distinction. Not to look bold or conspicuous, she was obliged to follow the same custom, and wear the one Lady Cordelia gave into her hand ; but, as she did so, she could not help hazarding a remark on the strangeness of the fashion.

* “ When the house began to fill, Lady Cromwell put on her vizard mask, and kept it on the whole of the play ; which is become the fashion for ladies to hide their faces.”

Pepy's Memoirs.

In her own peculiar way she replied, with emphasis, "Yes, if it were only here that they wore them."

"Only here," interrupted Sir Charles, echoing her last words, as he bent over the lady, as though pouring out a libation at the shrine of a deity.

"Would, that even *here*," he continued, warmly, "some feelings could be masked; but they cannot be subdued."

Perceiving that the fervency of his manner had called the eloquent blood into the cheeks of Lady Cordelia, and attracted the attention of Lady Berry, he artfully passed on to a common-place remark on the fulness of the house, with as much *sang froid* as if he had merely expressed a former hope that Lady Cordelia did not suffer from the heat; and turning abruptly to Lady Berry, devoted his attentions exclusively to her.

Rebecca, between the acts, looked with interest and pleasure on the illustrious assemblage of Royalty and Nobles;

in their Majesties, the Duke of York, Chevalier de Gramont, Prince Rupert, Lady Castlemain, and last, though not least, the interesting Queen of Bohemia.*

Rebecca seemed to be at once transported into a new world. She beheld some of the most brilliant and eminent personages of that gay, licentious court. The wise, the witty, the beautiful, were here assembled. But her eye rested with peculiar interest on the bereaved Queen of Bohemia, whose former splendour and adulation, when now contrasted by cold neglect and comparative penury, touched her deeply.

“You are looking,” exclaimed Lady Cordelia, with a sympathetic eye, in her soft, plaintive voice, “on the poor Queen. How sad she appears. Only those who know what it is to meet reverse

* For a just and affecting portrait of this unfortunate Queen, the reader is referred to Miss Benger's admirable Memoir of Elizabeth Stuart, of Bohemia.

of fortune — who weep the bitter tears of cold neglect — may guess her present feelings. In all the gay throng by whom she was once surrounded, not one solitary individual now approaches to bestow their benediction on her head." A heavy sigh stole from the bosom of the lady, who, however, the next minute turned to the flattering Sedley, and uttered some lively sally, with one of her bewitching smiles.

"How beautiful the Gwyn looks to-night," said the fair Jennings.

"No wonder," said Brounther, leaning over her, "that she is like another Helen that fired another Troy."

"Apropos," interrupted Sir Ambrose, now speaking for the first time, "of firing; it is a pity history has left us in the dark as to the real motive of making Alexander burn Persepolis, for I cannot think it was merely to exert his power."

"Decidedly not," returned Sir Charles; "but the reason is so obvious, that his-

tory thought it unnecessary to comment on the subject."

"And what was the reason?" enquired Lady Cordelia, "for really I don't know, though it is so obvious."

"No!" replied Sedley; "why, rely upon it, that Thaïs had discovered that some narrow street contained a handsomer woman than herself."

"Oh! I am sure," exclaimed Lady Cordelia, smiling, "that could not be the case; for there is Lady Berry sitting on a narrow bench next to me, and yet I do not wish to burn the house."

Sir Charles was too finished in his art, to flatter one woman at the expence of another; but no one knew how to look a compliment better, than himself; and at the moment he glanced a slight one at the fair speaker.

If beauty alone constituted attraction, nature had bestowed but a small portion on Sir Charles Sedley; but that little he had put out to such advantage and in-

terest, that few might enter the lists of fascination with him without sustaining a humiliating defeat; his hair was his chief ornament, and, according to the fashion of the times, fell in luxuriant curls on his shoulders, the dark moustache on his short chiselled upper lip, gave a turn to his smile, that rendered it irresistibly piquant; his eyes could not in themselves be called handsome, but he had the dangerous power of throwing into them the expression of every sentiment he wished to convey, but could not feel; his low voice was a perfect illustration of the word *persuasive*. Unlike his contemporaries, his dress was less characterized by its glitter and display, than by its costly simplicity, and studied negligence. Black velvet, unadorned, save by the rich point-falling collar of the day, being his favourite suit, which, as he was fully aware, accorded artfully with the sallow complexion, and rather pensive turn of his countenance. His

attentions to Lady Cordelia were too marked not to be perceived by her; but whether from a spirit of innate coquetry, or that she liked his society, though she did not like him, certain it is, she did not repel advances which she meant not to encourage. And when he asked her if she was to be of the Royal party to Greenwich the next day, she replied, "I have not yet determined;" and then added directly after, "but shall you?" A question which a man, even less vain than Sedley, might certainly have interpreted as complimentary to himself.

"I too am undecided about going," he answered.

"Oh, I think I will go," said Lady Cordelia, "for Lady Berry has never been there, and it is so pretty."

"Then we shall meet," said Sedley, in his low soft voice; and pressing her hand, and bidding her good night, left the box. When he was gone Lady Cor-

delia felt hurt; for she was aware that what she had said must have made him think that her going to Greenwich depended on his being there. "Well, what matter what he thinks," said she, in answer to her own surmise; and before she got home, *she* had ceased to think about it; and the next day a brilliant sun saw her on her way to Greenwich, forgetting there was such a person as Sedley in existence.

CHAP. XI.

SPORTS and pastimes of every description were carried on at this period with spirit and avidity. The court was variously entertained with promenades, water-parties, and horseback was equally resorted to, *pour passer le temps*. The magnificent Thames was not unfrequently covered with pleasure barges, gay with streamers, and joyous with music, vieing with each other in the beautiful women which they contained, as they glided down the silver current to the soft tones of the flute, or the loudly swelling clarionet, and other wind instruments.

- Choice collations were spread for the ladies, who, landing at the broad terrace, spread before the palace at Greenwich, there promenaded, talked, coquetted

amidst the play of fire-works, lending a thousand artificial stars to those heavenly luminaries which glittered in the sky.

Lady Cordelia Trevillion often partook in these pastimes. She was passionately fond of rural amusements, and rural scenes. Poetry and painting had given her a true relish for the beauties of nature, from the magnificent and sublime to all the softer scenery of pastoral life.

Frequently she withdrew from the festive party, leaning on Lady Berry's arm, to the most sequestered path, amidst the green embowering avenues in Greenwich Park; there, remote from public gaze, in pensive rapture she participated along with Rebecca in the admiration which the works of nature inspired. When clad in the soft and melancholy repose of descending twilight, the pervading tranquillity seems to lull every turbulent passion to rest, and to breathe

a spirit of peace at once delightful and soothing.

In these feelings Rebecca could warmly participate. Her evening of sadness had fallen upon her in the blooming spring-time of her life, and though she endeavoured to banish the tenderness with which she cherished the memory of her late husband, yet there were hours and seasons when his spirit seemed again to mingle with her kindred one.

There was a sympathetic feeling, a romantic enthusiasm in the character of the Lady Cordelia, at once dangerous and attaching, which had instantaneously won on the simple unsophisticated Rebecca.

As their intimacy increased, Lady Berry frequently detected her interesting friend in tears; but the profound silence she preserved whence their source, prevented her, from a feeling of delicacy, enquiring the cause.

The frank simplicity of Rebecca's character insensibly had blended, like a kindred spirit, with the Lady Cordelia's. In her she beheld a creature unassisted by art. Fresh, lovely, and graceful, as some new-born flower—Oh! how unlike those studied court butterflies, which daily shone in borrowed lustre beneath a dazzling sun.

They viewed together, from one of the beautiful elevations in Greenwich Park, the grandeur of the winding river, meandering between the green pastures; and in conversation sometimes lost themselves amidst the sequestered avenues of trees which stretch in various directions. Formerly, in this spot, Lady Cordelia had experienced moments of bliss never to be recalled. The remembrance brought tears into her eyes, and dejected and oppressed, she entreated Lady Berry to join the mingled groups of young beauties and gay cavaliers, that were

scattered through the park, and promised soon to follow. She felt sick at heart, and desired, for a few minutes, to be alone, that she might regain her composure.

Rebecca was timid, and reluctant to depart; she, however, retreated to a short distance, not wholly losing sight of Lady Cordelia.

A heavy sigh, which escaped on the retrospection of past happiness, was answered by one breathed so near her, that she quickly rose from the bench on which she sat, and beheld Sir Charles Sedley leaning against a tree, with folded arms, his hat drawn over his forehead, and his large penetrating eyes steadfastly fixed upon her.

Lady Cordelia, as he advanced, bowed slightly, and somewhat haughtily, and would have passed on, but he sprang forward, and throwing himself at her feet, abruptly seized both her hands.

“Dearest, best beloved, Lady Cordelia,” he exclaimed, with fervour, “hear me,” (as she struggled to be free) “only hear the overflowings of a heart which knows no other joy but you. I have loved you as none ever loved before—when I sleep you are my dream — when I wake it is you I worship. You are, and ever will be, time, space, and eternity to me. No wonder, then, that all nature wears a lovelier aspect in my sight, since nature’s self is tinged with you. No wonder then I became so kind to all the world, since you were all the world to me. If, unlike others, I have not profaned with rhymes those charms which no words may praise, and the still air has not echoed with your name, it is because that name’s my wealth; and what miser trusts his treasure to the winds?”

“Talk not thus wildly,” interrupted the lady with impatience, “but rise,

Sir Charles, I entreat, nor thus rudely detain me here. This is no place for language so displeasing to mine ear, nor will I listen to you."

"No place," cried he, passionately, "more so! Are not these friendly trees reverberant with lovers' sighs? The vows I plight are love's offering, and nature's shrine is here."

"Love's rhapsodies, you mean," replied Lady Cordelia scornfully, forcibly withdrawing her hand from his iron grasp. "Detain me not, Sir Charles Sedley," she continued, "your language is too bold, your presence most intrusive."

"Methinks," he said, as he slowly rose, "that command, that look of scorn, suits not the soft, the wooing manner of the Lady Cordelia Trevillion, who, by that command, may crush indeed, but not my spirit, and though now you spurn a heart you so wantonly have tortured, smile and triumph over the deso-

lation you have made, despise the passion your witchery has created, make me forget myself, but never *you*. Yet mark me, proud lady," he continued, almost choaking with indignation, "when love exists no longer, hatred usurps its place, and can and will achieve in vengeance more than love could dare."

"Your tone, Sir Charles, is high and insolent. But attempt, nay even achieve all you threaten, for I defy your malice and your vengeance."

"Say you so, lady. Then 'tis as I long have guessed. For that stripling son of Ormond's, I am spurned—rejected. But time, nor distance, nor coast, nor camp, shall intercept my vengeance. 'Tis he, forsooth, can make your gentle heart-strings thrill to the light notes of a guitar better than I can. 'Tis he can send sweeter songs through the midnight air to woo you from your slumbers, charm you with sonnets, that to others had been love's offerings a thousand times before.

Considering," he proceeded, "that this stripling boy, this pretty faced Ossory is fortune's minion; he bears his fortune meekly, wearing his conquests lightly as a summer garment. But, lady," Sir Charles continued, "for one so proud it excites my special wonder, you thus can waste your bloom in grief for one who leaves you for the frivolous court of France; where, if report speaks truth, he makes your love a stepping-stone for future victory."

Never before had the Lady Cordelia's mortification and displeasure been so strongly excited. She scarcely could restrain from a passionate burst of tears, but endeavouring to command herself, she indignantly exclaimed, "'Tis false."

"And is it false too," vehemently he interrupted, "that you love him?"—while his keen eye surveyed her.

Lady Cordelia was ready to sink—the colour mounted, like crimson, to her

cheeks ; her eyes sparkled with displeasure and indignation, as with spirit, though in a subdued voice, she replied, "Your interrogations, Sir, are as unanswerable, as inexplicable, as yourself."

"Silence is then a tacit assent, and I must withdraw my claims to a prize so peerless." With a malignant laugh, while a ghastly paleness flitted round his mouth, Sir Charles was withdrawing from the presence of Lady Cordelia, when he was alarmed by observing all colour had died away from her cheek, and for a moment, all sense of feeling was suspended, but the next, tears gushed in torrents from her eyes, and she sank overwhelmed on the bench beside her.

Sedley was touched by her sufferings ; he had quite subdued the lady, and he was relapsing into his former passionate tenderness, and would have supported her, but she broke hastily from him, and with the swiftness of a fawn, she fled

towards the spot where she sought and found Lady Berry.

In the act of retreat, the links of a slight chain, of curious workmanship, which Lady Cordelia always wore, gave way, broke, and fell to the ground.—Sedley seized it, and was going to follow her, and present it, when he felt his arm detained, and on looking up, perceived the Duke of Buckingham peering into his face with an expression ludicrous, arch, and provoking.

He started back, and frowning darkly, mechanically placed his hand upon his sword, whilst with the other he slowly adjusted his disarranged collar.

“Keep your good steel for better work, our tongues are sharp enough for this encounter, in all conscience; even *if it be* such a mighty crime, for one of his Majesty’s most loyal subjects to come within a hundred yards of another, in a place that is not sacred to any one of them in particular.”

"My dear Duke," said Sedley, holding out his hand, and now perceiving, for the first time, the absurd appearance his anger must have given him, "I—I—that is, I mean, have you been long here?"

"Why," replied his Grace, linking one arm through Sedley's, and fanning with the white plume of his hat, which he held in his other hand, the dust from his crimson boot, "not *very* long—about half an hour—but, by my faith, I'm deuced long; you should have found your "*dulce ridentem Lalagen amabo,*" by no means "*dulce loquentem,*" to-day. I see you look surprised at the accuracy of my information, but thanks to yonder oak, (which, by the way, is worthy of being palace to old Rowly himself,) I heard all, and saw as good a scene as any play-goer could desire,—*you* acted your part to the life,—the lady, *her's*, by no means badly; looking most beauteous

in her scorn ;—in good sooth, you would both shine at the Duke's house."

"I have often heard," said Sedley, making a full stop, and disengaging his arm from his companion's, "I have often heard that the Duke of Buckingham's jests, even when well executed, were always ill-timed, and beneath him ; but to become an eaves-dropper, in order to gratify an unwarrantable and paltry curiosity, *this* is descending too low."

"There you are wrong," said the Duke, folding his arms with the utmost *sang froid*, while he put on one of his equivocal smiles, "for I never was more *in alto* in my life, that being one of the highest trees in the park—and as for eavesdropping, I was only *leaves* dropping, and acorn dropping too, as I honourably showered down both in abundance, to try and make you aware that you had an auditor, who, not being there by design, had no wish to possess himself of your secrets ; but you were too intent on other

matters, there was no getting you to notice me or my ambassadors, the leaves and acorns ;—but as it has so fallen out, you may thank your stars the whole business rests in such *prudent* hands.”

“And if you were not there by design,” said Sedley, “pray, may I ask, if you can explain how you came there at all ?”

“Easily—I was there on a mission from Miss Stewart.”

“From Miss Stewart ! on an embassy then, I suppose, to Oberon or Queen Mab ?”

“Neither the one nor the other ; the matter is easily explained—you know how childish she is in all things ; you also know her passion for mimicry ; well, after making me take off that pompous ass, Arlington, the whole way from London to Greenwich, till the very waters echoed with her laughter, who should we meet, on landing, but Arlington himself, who began telling her a long story

about the wonderful effect nightingales' eggs had upon the voice ; and she having last night been sent some new French Romances by Miss Hamilton, and borrowed Lady Chesterfield's wonderful guitar, * nothing would satisfy her but to send me in quest of nightingales' eggs. In vain I assured her that *her's* was one of those exquisite voices that could not be improved ; but, out upon her, the tiresome jade would not believe me ; for Reason, as ill luck will have it, never pays her solitary visit to a silly woman, but at the very moment she should not. So I had nothing for it, but to hie me away to the green-wood tree. Ar't satisfied now ?”

“ ’Tis a *well told* tale,” said Sedley,

* Guitars were little known, and less played upon in England, till one Francisco Corbeta, an Italian, (in 1665,) excelling on the instrument, it became greatly the fashion in London, and Lady Chesterfield had, at this time, the best guitar in England.

with one of his deliberate smiles, that seemed to imply more faith in the expedience of what he had heard, than in its truth.

“Nay, then, for that matter,” replied Buckingham, folding his arms, and looking fixedly in his face, “I should like to know if you could tell *your* tale as well?”

“I crave your Grace’s meaning in a less oracular form; lacking, as I do, withal a wit to cope with your’s.”

“*My* meaning is plain, but Sir Charles Sedley’s, I own, I was at a loss to comprehend, when he so familiarly coupled the Earl of Ossory’s name with the mention of *red right hands*; not half an hour since, to the Lady Cordelia Trevillion.

“It was Sedley’s way, whether his weapon were his tongue or his sword, always to inflict his wounds in the most vital place;”—and after measuring the Duke, from head to foot, with his keen insolent eye, he said, in that cold deliberate tone, it was his wont to assume

on such occasions, knowing full well that the taunting calmness of the injurer never fails to exasperate the injured, till he himself appears in the wrong, —

“ I should have thought, the great loss *Lady Shrewsbury* must have experienced from the absence of the handsome Sidney, (as the women call him,) and his attentions, would have fully explained my allusion to Lord Ossory.”

Buckingham bit his lip ; his sword was half unsheathed ; but whether it was that his love (if love he could) for Lady Shrewsbury was on the wane, (that fair being who had, indeed, been *too dear* to him, since she had run him a hundred and sixty thousand pounds in debt)—or whether conscience at this moment conjured up the manes of her Lord, and that he thought one effectual duel was enough to answer for — or that he was deep in the pursuit of some new whim — or that all these cogent reasons together conspired to assuage his indignation ; —

certain it is, his sword was almost instantly returned to its scabbard, and striking his hand two or three times slowly on the hilt, he merely said, "Ah—then you are one of those who believe in the ridiculous report of the duel between Lord Ossory and Robert Sidney?"

"And why not? neither the one nor the other have ever been heard of since the night of the affray at the Tower."

"Not so," replied the Duke, "Ossory *has been* in France on a private mission to the King from our master here,—which, if I knew the purports, it behoves me not to disclose, — and as for Sidney he is at this very time we are speaking at Penshurst, living on memory, green trees, and moonlight."

"And the duel?"—

"Never took place."

Here Buckingham, for reasons best known to himself, thought fit to put an end to the conversation; and espying

the King at the end of a convenient vista, (through which he was not to be seen,) seemed equally to dispense with apology or explanation from Sedley for the manner in which he had spoken of Lord Ossory. — And holding out one finger to him, and nodding an adieu, said, “the King — good bye,” but turning back, he added — “Sed, you’ll sup with me to-night at York Place? — no revel.”

“Can’t,” said Sedley, “must be at Spring Gardens before night.”

“Then you’ll go with me to the mask at Whitehall this day week?” urged the Duke, — the other assented; and so these two worthies parted, who not ten minutes before had been for running each other through the body. — Sedley stood looking after him for a few minutes; and then exclaiming, “An enigma even to me—by George,” — walked on, not exactly determined where. — While the gay Duke, “not one but all

mankind's epitome," strode away, treading the green grass haughtily, swinging his plumed hat in one hand, whilst he waged war with the tassels of his point collar with the other; and leant his head continually back or forward as occasion required, to look through every tree he passed; — till he not only saw the fair Stewart, (with the King and a large party,) but heard her silly laugh — "So!" said he, untying his cloak, and flinging it on the ground, while he climbed an oak, "I must be very busy looking for these same nightingales' eggs, and as well in an oak as any where else; even if I break my neck by clambering seventy times higher than the highest card castle I ever built thee, thou beauteous piece of folly, whom men call Stewart; for with old Rowly to back thee, I might as well part with my dukedom, as avoid doing thy worst bidding, thou most exquisite of all unreasonables." — So saying, he reached a

tolerably high branch, and seating himself thereon, began singing, "'Twas as it fell upon a day, in the merry, merry month of May," &c.—"Ha! a rare bird that, (said the King, coming quite under the tree) that gives us words as well as musick; but what have we here?—(turning the Duke's cloak over with the point of his sword) no doubt some of the bird's plumage." "What bird *can* it be?" enquired the Stewart, infinitely delighted at the idea of Buckingham's being up in "*a great tree*, and the King's calling him a *bird*," as she afterwards confessed.

"If this be any of his plumage," said Ralph Montagu, taking up the crimson cloak, "he must be a Flamingo."

"Or a *humming* bird," said Sir Charles Berkeley, with a laugh at his own wit.

"Or a *starling*," ventured Killegrew, pointing to the star on the mantle.

"Pshaw" cried the King, who, next to high treason, considered punning the

most atrocious crime any one could be guilty of. — “Now what sort of bird do you think *I* take it to be?” said Lord Arlington, in a stage whisper to Lady Castlemaine. “Oh, I don’t know,” said the malicious beauty, looking most wickedly arch at the pompous peer; “but I should think *you* thought it a *mocking bird*.” This sally caused, as it was intended, a general laugh at Lord Arlington’s expence; — whether *he* felt the full force of the equivoque or not, it is certain the rest did; and even Buckingham from his tree joined in their mirth — and sent down a “Brava! brava! Cara,” to Lady Castlemaine,—and then descending himself, he knelt before Miss Stewart, bearing, as he said, a message to her from the nightingales, which he gave with much mock solemnity in the following words: “Most gracious lady, to every nightingale dwelling in or about this goodly park I have made known your wishes — yet have

they each individually, and all collectively refused to send you a single egg; — not, however, from any disobliging spirit among them, and least of all from indifference to the commands of so fair a lady, but they are marvellously good logicians — and one old nightingale (who looked like a chancellor) quite threw me off my guard, by asking if we of the better world did not think Miss Stewart's voice sweeter than any nightingale's? There could be but one answer to this; and when I had made it, then, said the old bird, of what use can our eggs be to her? None, on the score of improvement, cried I, as I took the liberty of observing to my liege lady before I set out; but if it be her *wish*, that is all sufficient; but the birds," continued the Duke, "who are an uncivilized barbarous race, (and whom, were I his Majesty, I should extirpate) did not seem to comprehend my assertion; and I did not *understand their not understanding me*, and was going to

tell them so, when another nightingale, who carried his crest higher than any of them, looking most foolishly wise, (no doubt a chamberlain, said Buckingham, flinging a look at Lord Arlington,) stepped forward, and flapping his wings three times, voted the *one* egg; a sort of neutral measure, that without being sufficient to satisfy me was quite enough to exasperate them.—No, no, no, screamed all the birds at once;—no, said another nightingale, whom I had not seen before, and who, from the dignified ease of his deportment and light load of sense in either eye, I concluded to be the king,—for,” added the duke, (perceiving a cloud on the royal brow, which threatened a storm, and recollecting in time Lord Rochester’s long banishment for his last peccadillo, which was nothing more than when intending to regale the king with a lampoon on the Duke of Richmond, showing him by mistake one on himself,) “for as the greatest art is

to conceal art, so the greatest proof of sense is to be able to conceal sense, and not let it evaporate in words, looks, and gestures, which may, it is true, catch the vulgar; but never imposes on the more enlightened; (at this ironical quibble, the face of Charles was again all sunshine — and the wiley duke* continued) — but I was saying that this royal looking bird negatived the Chamberlain's vote. — No, said he, for one who is perfection's self, — for Miss Stewart! to steal our eggs, is 'to take that which makes *us* poor indeed, and naught enriches her.' Here was Will Shakspeare and truth against me; so what could I do, most peerless lady, but make good my retreat?" "Oh nothing," said the Stewart; and much laughter

* Bishop Burnet says, in his *History of his Own Times*, vol. i. p. 137., speaking of the Duke of Buckingham: — "He was bred about the king; and for many years had a great ascendant over him; but he spake of him to all persons with that contempt, that he (Buckingham) at last drew a lasting disgrace on himself."

followed Buckingham's harangue ; which was only drowned by the noise of bells, which began ringing to summon to a collation the different parties scattered about the park. White capped cooks (all men of France) were seen running to and fro in every direction ; pages, lacquies, jesters, and musicians, all jostled one another ;—one man appeared particularly to attract the attention of the crowd that was gathered round him ; he was a tall old man, with a very long snuff-coloured garment, made after the Persian fashion, trimmed at the bottom with twelve enormous yellow vandykes ; in the centre of each was one of the signs of the zodiac, painted black — his shoes were of wood, turned up at the ends ;—round his waist he wore a spotted girdle of calf-skin ; and on his breast, in lieu of a star, a large brazen sun ; his beard (one half of which was equally divided into white, and the other black) descended below his girdle ; —

his eye-brows, which were also party-coloured, were so bushy as to form quite a veranda over his eyes, and render them almost invisible; on his head was an Armenian cap, only made of spotted cat's skin, instead of Astracan fur; and in the front of it was a stuffed cat's head and ears, with two large green glass eyes, which gave the wearer a very formidable appearance; in his mouth were two Jews' harps (or, as they were then called, mouth trumps), which he played most dexterously for a dwarf to dance to;—the dwarf was as curious a specimen of humanity as his master — he had a hump on his back that rose much above his head; neither was his costume inferior; having a dress made *all in one* of leopard skin; so that his hands and feet being tightly covered with it, had precisely the appearance of those of a wild beast; — in other respects he aped the extreme of the mode; — a falling collar, not indeed of point, but of highly tanned leather,

with leathern strings to correspond, at the end of which, however, instead of tassels, hung a deer's foot; — from his throat to his waist was a thick row of silver Spanish buttons, inside of which were little bells, so that whenever he moved, a jingling sound issued from them that was by no means unpleasant; he wore on his head a wig with large long curls, according to the fashion of the day, save that one side of it was of a jet black, and the other of a bright gold colour; his face was equally calculated to please all tastes; one cheek being of deep olive, to suit the sable locks that shaded it, whilst the other (thanks to a no small amalgamation of red and white paint,) displayed as many lilies and roses as the garden of the Houries in the seventh heaven; his *moustaches*, too, bore the same stamp of impartiality, one being blond, the other brun, and his chin-tuft in the spirit of variety that distinguished his whole person, grey;

— his staff of office was a long bull-rus ~~sh~~, at the end of which was affixed an i ~~in~~-flated bladder, with which *ex officio* ~~he~~ he avenged every indignity offered to ~~his~~ his person or appearance. — The royal part~~y~~, as they passed to their tent, could n ~~ot~~ but stop and look at this grotesque pai ~~r~~; the strange antics of the dwarf so diverted the king that he gave him a gold Jacobus, which the other received with the most condescending imper-tinence, and dexterously attaching a string to it, hung it round his neck like an order, — taking immediately after a leaden medal from his breast, on which was engraved a likeness of himself and his master, perforated at the top so as to admit a piece of hempen string; — he stepped up to the king, and suspended it to his majesty's button, and then retired with the air of an ambassador who had conveyed the present of one sovereign to another.

“Fore George,” said the king, “but

thou art the very prince of fools, and we ourselves should much like to have thee, but that our court is, in truth, already over-stocked with thy kind, and it would be a pity to rob thy master of his only one ; but we will see more of thee anon ; mean while look to it, my merry men, and see that they starve thee not while we dine." So saying, the " mutton-eating king" passed on to his rose-coloured and silver tent, where all that French cooks could do for his table, and French milliners for his beauties, combined to please him. During the repast, the musicians were not idle ; and while the gay monarch, who had to endure his consort on one side, could only pledge la belle Stewart in silence from his jewelled cup, the duke (who had just commenced his plan of governing her for the purpose of better managing the king) entertained her with such follies as best suited both her taste and capacity ; among others, he took special care of her little dog, *Ninon*,

whom he kept in his lap, holding her paws and the knife and fork close together, (as we guide a child's hand that cannot write,) and so, with his assistance, making the dog appear to cut its own food, and convey it to its mouth, without putting its head into the plate—which so amused the fair Stewart and her royal lover, that they could not eat for laughing.—“How nice and cool it is here,” observed the Stewart; “the sun does not come in at all; I wonder why it does not?”

“Because,” returned Buckingham, in answer to the sapient surmise, “he is vain, and likes not to come where brighter suns would eclipse him.”

“Oh, I see,” said the Stewart, tittering, and looking towards that brown and bony piece of endurance, Lady Rochester, who sat within four of them.

“True,” rejoined the duke, “you are a better astronomer than I am, for *it* is a *luminous* body coming in contact with

an *opaque* one that causeth an eclipse, and the *opaque* one that eclipseth."

"Look at the Duke of York," whispered the Stewart—"how funny he looks, does he not? but how handsome Miss Hamilton looks, does she not?" Of these two questions the duke only thought fit to reply to the latter, by assuring the fair querist, that beauty ceased to exist in *her* presence; for that even Miss Hamilton's otherwise beautiful face, *near hers*, appeared *une figure de la derniere laideur*."

"Oh, you do not think *all* faces lose by being near mine," said the laughing beauty; "for I hear you were very busy, some time ago, writing sonnets to Miss *Blague*."

"Most true," said Buckingham, with great solemnity; "I own, that spite of that *chevaux de frize* of white eyelashes, that mutilates all the glances she gives and receives, (the latter, albeit, ever in the minority,) I did at one time

entertain the presumptuous thought of wooing her on my own account ; but *dans le premier pas*, (*i. e.*) trying to indite one of those very sonnets you allude to—I found it impossible to get more than *one* rhyme for a name as unique and odd as its owner ; but having occasion, at this critical juncture, to dispatch a billet to the Chevalier de Gramont, I thought he might extricate me from my dilemma, and so I put at the end of my letter—‘*pray assist me—what must she be ? when*

*I can find no rhyme for Miss Blague,
But that she's a monstrous plague ;*

but instead of helping me, the inhuman chevalier merely tore off this part of my letter, and sent it back to me, with these words written under it : “ *je vous prend au pied de la lettre, vous avez raison ;* ”—thus were all my hopes blighted at once ; but instead of impiously repining, and giving way to despair, I instantly

recommenced, for the good of another, my labours ; to which those of Hercules were nothing — and resolved that love should do his worst, and I my best for the exquisite Blague ; and the Marquis de Brisacier, whom I believe,” (said Buckingham, changing his voice to that of the Marquis, whom he mimicked to the life) — “ *have had de honeur to be laugh at more den mille fois par Mam’selle Stewart, la plus belle rieuse du monde.*” *La plus belle rieuse du monde* was still laughing at Buckingham’s account of what he called his *délire* for Miss Blague, when Lord Arlington’s page came to present her with a golden cup of sack on the part of his master ; — it was then the fashion for a lady to sip wine from a cup, and return it to the cavalier who had sent it, that he might pledge her from the same : — as she raised it to her lips, Buckingham leant forward, and mimicking Lord Arlington, who sat at the other end of the table, told him that Miss Stewart

- drank to his health in all sincerity, and was glad of this public opportunity of expressing her obligations to him, as he contributed more to her *amusement* than any man at court. The good natured monarch, alarmed at the emphasis the duke gave to the last word—and at his audacity in taking the chamberlain off to his face in a manner so ridiculously like, that no one could conceal their mirth—instantly called their attention to the medal the dwarf had given him.—“How is this,” said he, taking it from his button, and examining it; “here we are as fairly entrapped into granting a boon as Cydippe was by Acontius;—however, the knave was determined his request should have some weight with us, by its being on lead:—listen to it, my Lords;” (and the king read) “*Whosoever has worn this medal but for a moment is bound, as though he had taken an oath, to grant the first boon the tallest figure inscribed thereon shall ask of him, and that*

too before another sun sets.” “Odds life,” cried the king, when he ceased reading, “but thou art as ingenious a piece of knavery as ever found its way to a court, — and we will hear what thy modesty requires of us. — Killegrew, seek this knave, or rather knaves, and bring them here on the instant: — and, George,” (he added, turning to Buckingham, and lowering his voice,) “canst lend me fifty broad pieces, in case their demands should lie that way?”

“I grieve that I cannot,” said Buckingham, “for to say truth, I have of late left off lining my doublet with gold, conceiving that, as your majesty never did so, it must be bad style.” — Here the duke took a pinch of snuff, as a full stop. — “Out upon thy *empty* compliment, of imitating so poor a precedent,” said the king, laughing. — The repast being at an end, embossed cups of dead silver, in the form of a water-lily, filled with rose-water, were placed before each person, —

and *Ninon's* paws, infinitely to the diversion of her mistress, duly plunge into one of them by Buckingham. — After an hour's absence, Killegrew returned, saying "that he had in vain sought every where for the dwarf and his master, but could find no trace of them, and no one could give him any information respecting them." "'Tis wondrous strange," said the king, "and not a little increaseth our wish to see them; but, no doubt, his diplomatic dwarfship does not brook being bidden, and will choose his own time to expound the strange inscription on his medal." — "I must to London," said the Duke of Bucks, "before the sun sets, and he is now beaming farewell to-day; but if I see any thing of this pair, I'll secure them and bring them with me to Whitehall to-night." — "Do so," said the king, "and tell them they shall have their boon." "But whatever you do, pray try and find the dwarf," said the Stewart. — Buckingham promised, and left the tent.

CHAP. XII.

THE duke walked on till he gained the water-side, asking every one he met, if they had seen the two mountebanks — but no intelligence could he gain concerning them. While he was waiting for his boat, he heard a guitar, accompanied by a very pretty soprano voice, which he took for a woman's, till, turning round, he perceived the musician to be a young boy, about nine or ten years old, of uncommon beauty ; his dress had once been that of a page, but had not only seen better days, but was so fantastically arranged, as to retain nothing of its former calling but the green and gold that composed it ; he wore a velvet cap of the same colours, put on, on one side, so as to display the prettiest head of golden curls that ever was seen. On Bucking-

ham's observing him, he ceased playing—and tripping up to him, accosted him, with “My Lord Duke, the evening is sultry; your Grace's cloak must be heavy for such noble shoulders, and I shall feel honoured in carrying it for you.”

“’Tis plain, by thy civility, that thou *dost* take me for a duke,” said Buckingham; “but how camest thou to guess me at that mark, Sir Conjuror?”

“If you are not a duke,” said the urchin, “why nature's a cheat, and fortune's a greater; for, to my taste, you are the properest stuff for a duke that ever came under the scrutiny of my vision.”

“Bravely mouthed, and worthy of Whitehall,” cried Buckingham, flinging him one angel for his civility, and another for his flattery; “but tell me, jackanapes, hast seen any thing of a tall, strange looking man, with a marvellously whimsical dress, and a dwarf with him, stuffed into leopard skin?”

Amor, se mi vuoi bene,
Consola le mie doglie
Tu rendimi la moglie,
Che in male guarira,
Le donne non mi guardano ;
E dicon ch' io son brutto,
Ma in ciò non son colpevole ;
Mio padre fece tutto.
Infatti, ne convengo
La faccia è una graticola
Ho gli occhi di civettola
Il naso d' elefante
In somma, è indubitabile
E ver, son troppo brutto ;
Ma amor aggiusta tutto ;
Amor m' ajutera."

When Buckingham's laughter would allow him to speak, he was profuse in his praises of the voice and humour of the little minstrel, and asked him if he should like to be his page.

" I am much beholden to your Grace," replied the boy, " and should marvelously like to serve so rare a gentleman, did I not already own another master."

" And what name may he claim who commands the services of your page-ship ?" enquired the duke.

“ Albeit,” said the stripling, “ his names are as numerous as his garments, and he changes them about as often, and not knowing exactly which of them he identifies himself with at *this* moment, I can venture no solution to that question.”

“ Well, if *thou* too art not a Proteus, what name may have the honour of designating *thee*?” asked Buckingham.

The boy hesitated for a moment, and then blushing like a girl, answered, “ Zingaro.”

“ Zingaro! why, thou little gipsy, if thou art really an Italian, thou speakest English to a miracle — and if, on the other hand, thou art nothing but English, thou singest Italian like a forgery, so look at it which way one will, thou art a cheat ; but I shrewdly suspect, Signor Zingaro, thou hast hit upon that name less to distinguish thee, than to designate the gipsy life thou appearest to lead.”

Zingaro made no other answer, than

by shaking back his pretty golden curls, and striking the chords of his guitar, to which he sang an English ballad with as much pathos as he had previously done his buffo song with spirit and humour. — When he ceased, the duke drew the crimson curtains of the awning, and ordered him to sing on — then turning to the boat-men, cried, “Ply your oars swiftly, ye lazy varlets, for already night is on the waters, and I have much to do ere day dawns.” So saying, he gathered his cloak closely about him, and composed himself to sleep, from which he did not awaken till they arrived at Westminster stairs.

On landing, a shabby-looking porter came up to him, and asked if he might carry his Lordship’s baggage. “Baggage!” said the duke; “methinks drinking has made thee blind, for I *have none* —”

“What call you that?” said the man, pointing to Zingaro.

“No girl,” said Buckingham, not a little pleased at the man’s taking or pretending

to take him for a woman, as he by no means disliked the idea of having it supposed that some enamoured damsel had adopted that disguise for the purpose of being near him—"No girl, merely a young musician, whom I've picked up in this day's adventure."

He had scarcely finished speaking, before the porter seized Zingaro, guitar and all, and slung him across his shoulder like a portmanteau; to which strange proceeding the boy did not make the slightest resistance, and the duke was so amused with its pleasantry, that he allowed the man to follow him, looking back, however, every now and then, to see that he did not escape with the boy. "How comes it," (said he, as the moon fell full on the figure of the porter while they crossed the bridge,) "how comes it, that a strong man like thee, well able to work, should yet bear about thee so many of the outward and visible signs of poverty, without being overburdened with any of its inward and spi-

ritual grace? for thou hast neither humility nor diffidence to stand in thy way."

"Those two last qualifications," replied the porter, "have so long been out of fashion at court, that they have now become vulgar even among the vulgar; but as for my being poor, I may well be so, when such fellows as my Lord Rochester, and the rest of the set, have the effrontery to employ me without the principle to pay me."

"Thou art an impudent varlet," said the duke; "and if thou makest as free with the goods and chattels of thy employers, as thou dost with their names and characters, I marvel not that they do not pay thee, for thou must pay thyself; — but for my Lord Rochester, he is a worthy gentleman, who would not defraud such as thee; but being at present absent from court, may have forgotten thy demands: certain it is, thou wouldst not dare to traduce him to his face."

“ Ay, but I have said it to his face,” cried the porter, “ and” — here they arrived at the duke’s house ; and the thread of the porter’s harangue was snapped by the loud ring Buckingham gave at the gate.

“ Here,” said the duke, “ here is a Jacobus for thee, and put down thy burden.”

“ Not so,” replied the porter, rejecting the money, and following the duke across the court, — “ my business ends not here.”

“ Follow me then, for thy effrontery seems an indisputable passport,” said Buckingham, who would have risked an empire for a jest, an adventure, or a laugh — and the duke and the porter ascended the marble stairs together ; the latter still carrying Zingaro on his shoulders, unstared at even by the crowd of menials in waiting — who had long ceased to feel, much less to appear surprised, at any of their enigmatical lord’s proceedings.

The mansion was, in every way, worthy of the owner, who has been described by Lord Orford as possessing "the figure and genius of an Alcibiades, who could equally charm the presbyterian Fairfax, and the dissolute Charles; who alike ridiculed the witty king and his solemn chancellor; who plotted the ruin of his country with a cabal of bad ministers, or, equally unprincipled, supported its cause with bad patriots; that Alcibiades, who turned chemist; who, devoid of every virtue, was a real bubble, and a visionary miser; with whom ambition was but a frolic, and with whom the worst designs were for the most foolish ends." The magnificence of his house seemed less the result of taste than the gratification of whim; statue crowded on statue, as though one had superseded the other in the good graces of its owner, before its companion had time to be removed; so that Cupids, Venuses, vestals, and Apollos, jostled each other in a most unorthodox

manner. On each side of every step of the stairs was an alabaster vase, filled with exotics; and at either end of each landing-place marble vestals, who held in their hands censers, from which issued a perfumed flame, that shed a soft, but very brilliant light. The banisters were of bronze; the part to lean on was in the form of twisted branches of palm — whilst the other was composed of lyres, with golden chords, and a sprig of myrtle in green bronze ran through each of them; all the doors were of black oak, richly carved, and beaded with gold, and over each a velvet drapery, ornamented with gold or silver fringe, and of the same colour as the furniture of the room to which it belonged. That of the first ante-room they entered was blue satin, embroidered with silver stars, except the hangings, which were of blue and white velvet, beautifully shaded in imitation of clouds, and studded with stars of cut crystal, that sparkled like a real firma-

ment; on the ceiling was an allegorical painting of Love, chasing the hours ;— outside the windows were innumerable parterres of mignonette, through which the summer air came wooingly ; making the room redolent with their breath. On a couch, near the door of the inner room, were two pages, half lying, half sitting, both fast asleep at either end. “ How now, sirs ? ” said the duke, shaking their shoulders, and most effectually awakening them ; “ *both* asleep on your posts ! How should you like,” he added, pointing to Zingaro, who had just been placed on *terra firma* by the porter, — “ how should ye like to be displaced by yonder urchin ! who is worth ten such sleepy-headed knaves as you ? ”

They stared for a moment at their master’s companions, and the next, threw open the doors to let him pass, but would have prevented the entry of the other two, had not the porter pushed them back, and, shutting the door in

their faces, forced his way after the duke, leaving Zingaro with them — no doubt, as a hostage for his return. — The room they were now in, was spacious beyond measure, and as lofty as it was large; the dark and highly carved oak of the wainscot was so intermixed with ivory and gold, as to relieve, in a great measure, the sombre hue of the wood; a gallery went round the apartment, containing a splendid collection of pictures, all the *chefs-d'œuvre* of the best masters; it was supported by Corinthian pillars, of green marble; between each pillar was a statue that served as a lamp-bearer: — Mercuries, whose caduceuses were flame — Cupids and Cephaluses, whose arrows were fire — Apollos and Orpheuses, whose lyres emitted light for music, — and Circes, whose cups contained the same destructive element. The hangings were crimson and gold, upheld by gilded eagles; in the centre of the room was a large study-table of ivory, inlaid

with gold, at which sat a young man writing; whose form and face were perfect symmetry; his beautiful chesnut hair fell in large natural curls below his shoulders, according to the fashion of the times; his dress was of dark coloured velvet. The large rosettes of his red-heeled shoes were covered with dust, and his whole attire bore the appearance of recent travelling; at his feet lay a large Siberian wolf-dog in a profound slumber, and at the back of his chair hung a cloak and a casket; whilst on the table beside him was his hat and sword, which also bore the dusty relics of a recent journey. The entrance of Buckingham and the porter seemed unheeded by him, till his attention was roused by the low growling of his dog, who had half risen from his recumbent posture, and advanced one paw on the defensive, whilst the other remained tucked lazily under him. On perceiving the Duke, the young man rose to meet him, his dog following

slowly, with his head down, and his tail wagging leisurely : whilst his master was engaged with the Duke, he thought fit to scrutinize the porter narrowly, resenting any friendly overtures on the part of the latter, with a suppressed growl. — Buckingham conversed for a few minutes apart with the handsome stranger, and then looking towards the undaunted porter, took a lamp from the table, and conducted his guest to the upper end of the room, and throwing open a door which led into a dressing-room, said — “ Here you will find all you want, and when I have dismissed yonder varlet, I’ll be with you anon.” So saying, he closed the door, and returning to the porter, asked him “ what his business might be, since he had intruded so far, to transact it.”

“ Whatever my business may be,” replied he, with even more effrontery than he had yet assumed, “ we can better discuss it at supper, over a *filet* of peacocks’ brains, and a flask of your Grace’s best

Chambertin, for there's truth in wine; but, I fear, very little without it."

"Take heed, knave," cried the Duke, "thy impudence is outstripping thy discretion; but if thou hast aught to ask, be brief — for my time is full till mid-night."

"And is it so, the Duke of Bucks would escape asking his old friends to supper?" said the porter, folding his arms, and looking with his head on one side, at the Duke; "if it is, then, in good sooth, is George Villiers changed." At this speech, which Buckingham conceived the extremity of the fellow's ill-timed pleasantry already carried too far, — his hand was on a little silver bell, which, taking from the table, he was about to ring for some one to conduct the porter out, who did not appear inclined to take leave of his own accord, — when the latter sprang forward, and placing one hand on the Duke's arm, with the other (as though it had been the wand of a magician) tore from his face his beard,

which was affixed to a mask of coarse muslin, and from his person the rags which enveloped it, and discovered to the eyes of the astonished Duke, John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, in full dress, even to his George and Garter.

“What, Rochester! — why this prank exceeds all thine others; and though I have not seen thee these three months, I could never have dreamt, that saucy knave of a porter, who was so eloquent on thy merits, had such good reason to be acquainted with them, — but did I not defend thee bravely against his accusations?”

“Ay, right well,” said Lord Rochester, laughing, “but I should be the more beholden to thee, were it not that I have somewhere heard, that there is a sort of *esprit de corps* among rogues and rascals, (in which class the parsons and citizens, God forgive them, rank us,) which makes them always break a lance in defence of one another; conceiving, that

an impertinence offered to one, is an indirect affront to the worthy community at large ; and therefore it behoves them to make common cause of it under all such attacks."

" At that rate," said Buckingham, " thou must ever be in arrears to the tribe, John."

" Yes, for I have to mortgage so much valour on thy account ; — but, tush, the night wears apace, and thou hast not yet thanked me for the amusement my dwarf and I afforded thee at Greenwich, — but above all, how did old Rowly relish the jest ? and what thought he of the medal my ambassador did him the honour to present to him ?"

" What ! thou the mountebank too ? a rare genius truly ; — why thou *hast not* over shot thy mark ; for the last thing Charley bid me do, was to seek thee and thy dwarf (little dreaming it *was thee*,) — and tell thee thy boon was granted, — but if he should turn restive

at the discovery, I pity thee, for the whole court is in possession of the adventure, and wild to know how it will end; — God send, not in thy defeat, Jack.”

“Thinkest thou that fortune is not to be managed as well as any other jade?” said Rochester, “but leave that to me; — give me thy assistance, and spare thy fears, for an ounce of help is better than a pound of pity, — and the first help thou canst give me is to order supper as quickly as may be, for I am as hungry as one of Richmond’s hounds.”

“We will have it on the instant,” (said the Duke, ringing the before mentioned silver bell) — “but where didst thou get that choice piece of mal-construction the dwarf? and where hast thou left him?”

“Nay,” (cried Rochester,) “not so ill formed either; for if thou wilt find me a prettier page in the three kingdoms, or a cleverer one than my little Eden

Green, who sang to thee from Greenwich to London, and who is now in yonder ante-room, sell my earldom for a groat, and Wilmot for half the money."

"What! thy page a Proteus too? By my faith he is worthy of his master, for never was greater change from darkness to light, than from the spotted dwarf to the golden haired minstrel—but how—" here one of the sleeping pages appeared to answer the bell.—

"Oh, see that we've supper directly," said Buckingham; "covers for three, and let it be in the chamber of the forty saints." The page stared at seeing Rochester, (not knowing how on earth he had got in,) but at length coming to his recollection, bowed, and withdrew.

"Why in the chamber of the forty saints?" said Rochester, laughing as he repeated Buckingham's order, "is it, gentle Bucks, by way of performing a sort of quarantine against the d—l in case he should drop in to make a *parti*

quarré whilst I am relating my adventures, — which I intend to regale you with at supper?”

“Ha! ha! ha! no bad idea,” laughed the Duke, “though it was not mine, — as my only reason for supping in that room is, that it has a terrace which looks into the street, at the back of the house, that is the shortest way to Whitehall, and will save our going through the Court — which may be as well avoided, considering I have another guest, who must have a private audience with old Rowly as well as thee. — Young Ossory, whom you saw here anon; and who by the way is just returned from France with a set of brilliants for my *élève* Frances Stewart, who could not rest till she had a set the *facsimile* of Madame de la Vallière’s, of which the Viscomtesse d’Angelieu had foolishly said so much in her letters,—but this is a secret,” said Buckingham, (one however which he had pretty well disseminated,) — “but

the dwarf's hump," he added, "I was going to ask you how you managed that?" —

"*Utile dulci*," said Rochester, "is one of my maxims; and that hump is an itinerant receptacle for our wardrobes; contains moreover pens, ink, and paper, and even money when we have it, besides divers other implements meet for travelling gentlemen of our calling." —

"Bravo!" cried Buckingham, "but I must see my friend Zingaro."

"Who mean you?" asked Rochester.

"Why your thousand and one bodied page, for so it was he christened himself coming up the river."

"Ah! say you so? then, 'fore George, he does justice to the pains I have taken with his wits to sharpen them; for the invention was purely his own, though appropriate enough to have been mine. — I suppose you know I bought him from a gang of those cat-fed knaves the gipsies, before he had well numbered

three summers? — but I must seek the urchin, for I have two missions to send him on while we sup; — so saying, he walked to the door of the ante-room and called him. When he appeared, Buckingham went up to him, and patting his head, said, —

“ So master Eden Green, now that I know by what name to invite thee, I shall be happy to see thee to supper; when thou 'hast done thy master's bidding — which albeit none can do better; even to finding a good name for thyself, — though thou wert not conjuror enough to make one for *him*.”

Master Eden bowed, and smiled his thanks to the Duke for his invitation and his compliment, but assumed a becoming degree of gravity at the latter part of it that related to his lord; and turning to him begged to know his commands.

“ Here,” said Rochester, taking a parcel of letters and papers from his

bosom — “take this (putting a letter into his hand,) “to Mrs. Barry at the theatre, and tell her I’ll call myself to-morrow — but that the king has changed his mind about “Tom Essence.”—Then go to José Corvò, the Jew perfumer, and tell him to send me four bottles of the same *Greek smoke*, as he calls it, that he sent me last week ; — and eight dozen more of those pastille hearts, (the only ones which really consume,) but *mind*, he is to send them to *Tower Street*, — not on any account to the *Mall* ; — then go *thou* on to *Tower Street*, as if thy heels had wings, (as I sometimes verily think they have,) and bring the dresses we wore to-day at Greenwich, (or rather the fellows to them,) and put into thy hump the diary I have kept since I’ve turned astrologer, — thou’lt find it tied round with that blue girdle of Mrs. Middleton’s in the drawer where I keep the ready-made horoscopes ; — and now, sirrah, off with thee,” said Rochester,

illustrating his command with a slap on the shoulder, — “but mind,” he added, “that thou art back before we have time to despatch the first flask of his Grace’s Rhenish.”

Master Eden was out of sight in a moment ; and as he vanished, his Grace’s *maitre-d’hotel* appeared to announce supper. — “Ah, *benè*,” cried Rochester, as he linked his arm through the Duke’s, who led the way to the upper end of the room — and opening the door of the apartment in which he had left Lord Ossory. — “Here now,” said he, addressing the latter, while he pointed to his companion — “who would have thought that that ambulating rag-fair you saw with me anon, should have concealed so goodly a part of the peerage?” The young earl laughed much as he shook hands with Rochester ; and listened to the account of his day’s adventure. — “Come, come,” interrupted the Duke, “Monsieur Challon likes not to have his

most exquisite efforts of culinary genius spoiled, — as I doubt not they will be, if we tarry much longer, — besides we have much to do, and brief time to do it in ; to listen to thy three months' adventures alone, John, would take one the best part of a life, much less the remnant of a night ; to say nothing of thy peace, which is yet to be made at Whitehall, and which may take more time and trouble than we think for ; — so with your leave we'll to supper, as this youth's toilette is now complete," (glancing at the court-suit for which Lord Ossory had exchanged his travelling dress,) and saying this, he opened another door, through which they all passed — Lord Ossory calling " Leo, Leo, Leo," to his dog, who, with the characteristic feeling of his species, appeared as anxious to court attention from Rochester in his splendid attire, as he had been tenacious of receiving it from him in his tattered habiliments. — When

they had arrived at the end of the long and dimly-lit corridor which they were in, they descended a flight of narrow stone steps; and arriving at another, as spacious and brilliantly illuminated, (for it was in fact an armoury,) as the first had been narrow and obscure, they reached the room of the "forty saints."

CHAP. XIII.

THE room in which Buckingham entertained his guests took its name from having twenty painted windows on either side, that commenced about five feet from the ground, and reached to the ceiling; on each window, in colours exquisitely blent, was illustrated the leading event in the life of some particular saint. The room itself was built like a cathedral, save that its Doric columns and fretted arches were of oak instead of stone; banners that had been won in the Holy Land waved gloomily from the latter; whilst the former were decorated with escutcheons, spears, greaves, gauntlets, and other disjointed pieces of armour; also the spoils of the crusades. Between each pillar stood a wooden knight, armed *cap-a-pee*, or shell clad

ilgrim, whose pious prototypes had long mingled with the classic dust of ages ; — indeed, the whole room seemed one last emporium of the relics of the church, militant ; and strangely incongruous did the large oaken refectory table, spread in its centre, and groaning under the weight of gold plate, costly viands, and sparkling wines appear ; it might have seemed like a banquet spread for the dead, had not the boisterous mirth and ribaldry of two of the banqueters forbade the idea. The attendants were all in waiting, but none of them within hearing ; for the duke liked no one to forestall him in the publishing of his own or his friends' secrets, and, therefore, never trusted to the ear of a domestic, what his tongue might betray. Monsieur Challon, his grace's *artiste de cuisine*, was the very prince of caterers ; the *ne plus ultra* of cooks ; his *compots de bécassine* were food for the gods ! his *rissoles* unrivalled ; his *entremets-au-ris de veau*, superb ; his

soupe à la reine perfectly regal. Then he understood *le système omeletoire*, au dernier point de sa beauté ; omelette soufflée, omelette baveuse, omelette aux fines herbes, omelette à la Montmorency, omelette de printemps, omelette au sang de lièvre, omelette bourgeoise, omelette de ménage, omelette du diable à quatre ; each owned his power ; and each, in its turn, excelled the other. Then his *filets* of peacocks' brains could not be imitated by any *artiste* in Europe ; and could barely have been equalled in ancient Rome ; but his *chef-d'œuvre* was a devil of his own invention, which consisted of quails, stewed in champagne, and then grilled with all the spices of the East, and which he christened, by way of a delicate compliment to his master, "*Di-able piquant à la Villiers*," (Buckingham being too hard a name for a French tongue to get out in a hurry.) Monsieur Challon was, indeed, the only person from whom people might have endured

“ *toujours perdrix;*” but from *him, kings* as well cardinals might have borne them for ever, even had they been *à la reine*; but his chief merit consisted, as he thought, (and his master too) in his having left, as he phrased it, the *court* of *Louis Quatorze*, whose once far-famed *petits soupers* had never recovered the state of mediocrity his departure had plunged them into; — but then, much as he loved his *chère patrie*, and revered *le grand monarque*, the latter had once dared to dispute with him the propriety of substituting one soup for another, and this was an indignity his culinary sense of honour could not brook! Such was Monsieur Challon’s account of the matter; but the truth was, when the duke was in France, previous to the Restoration, he liked his fare at the French court so well, that he determined to get personally acquainted with the source from whence it came, and having achieved this mighty point, by dint of

bribery, and a promise of (the then) enormous salary of 100*l.* a-year; but still more by flattery, and imploring him to come and improve *l'état barbare* of English cookery, Monsieur Challon was persuaded to leave *la belle France*, and embarked for England, fully convinced, in his own mind, that Cromwell, during his protectorship, never had half so much to do and undo as he should have, and equally assured, that the victories of *Turenne* and *Condé* were nothing to those he should gain over the "*au naturel*" Goth and Vandalism of English kitchens. Be this as it might, he had no cause to repent his trip; for being just as fond of accumulating bright guineas as any lady at court, he often kindly lent his services to the Chevalier de Gramont, Killegrew, Lord Ranelagh, and others; so that in the very first year of his emigration, he nearly quadrupled the salary allowed him by his nominal master.

“ Now then,” said Buckingham, filling a golden cup full of wine, when Monsieur Challon’s supper had been fully praised and half eaten, “ here’s to thy exploits, Rochester, and the sooner we hear them the better.”

“ I need not acquaint either of you,” began the Earl, “ with my *gaucherie*, in showing old Rowly a lampoon on himself, instead of one I had made on Richmond, and being accordingly banished from court some three months ago; but I need acquaint you where I went, for doubtless you all thought it was to the country, to meditate on the mutability of human affairs, and repent at leisure of my folly; — quite the contrary,—if not a better subject, I at least became a better citizen than ever; a change, miraculous as it may seem, that was accomplished by the simple process of my hiring three commodious apartments up three pair of stairs in Tower-street; *

* See Burnet’s Life of Rochester, ed. 1774, p. 14.

and there passing for a German doctor, I caused hand-bills to be printed and distributed, which contained endless eulogiums on my own skill. The humbug was sufficiently great to satisfy even an English public; and I soon had patients flocking to me from all parts of the town, whom I quacked till, if they were not cured, they thought they ought to be so, which, in nine cases out of ten, is the same thing as being so; but the people whom I gained most renown amongst, were the citizens' wives, who came to me to be cured of nerves, the spleen, and other modifications of ill temper, under polite names. I soon made them so well pleased with themselves, and consequently with me, that they went home ringing my praises, and so improved in humour, that the husbands came with gold, and gratitude, and gave me pressing invitations to their houses, to which they would take no refusal, had I been inclined to make any, which I was not.

Once domesticated with these worthy folks, I made out that I enjoyed as great a reputation at court, as I did in the city, (and so I did, but of a somewhat different kind, it is true,) and if I delighted the wives, by detracting from the merits of the court beauties, as compared to theirs, so I equally charmed the husbands, by railing at the profligacy of the men; (Forgive me, gentle Bucks, if I did not spare thee;) but on *myself*, I was particularly severe; even robbing you, Sedley, Killegrew, Berkeley, and Ranelagh, of a few of your achievements to emblazon my own quarterings; and, indeed, if it were not that I never set one sou's more value on my character than its worth, I should have more than once betrayed myself, by resenting the opprobrious vocabulary these varlets had recourse to whenever my name was mentioned. However, I soon grew tired of conquests so easily acquired, and fame, so more than easily retained; moreover,

I found that at the end of six weeks, I owed Blondel, the jeweller, for pearls, brilliants, rings, chains, and trinkets, (which I gave to the citizenesses, in exchange for their good opinion of me,) 2000*l*.

“ Two thousand pounds !” echoed Buckingham.

“ Even so,” said Rochester, “ but if thou find it difficult to swallow, thou hadst better liquidate the debt with another cup of Rhenish ; though, in truth, the liberality of the husbands enabled me to defray more than half the debt I had incurred for their wives ; but, as I before said, I grew tired of all this, and giving out that pressing business called me instantly to Germany, I took lodgings in another house in Tower-street, and disguised myself as an Italian mountebank, and practised astrology to the wonder and admiration of every one. It was then, indeed, that my fame in good earnest reached the court ; first came all the Abi-

gails, whom I astounded with the detail of circumstances, the knowledge of which I had long been in possession of in my own proper person ; and such was the incredible account they gave of my magical power of foretelling all that was to come, and guaranteeing its fulfilment by the truth with which I had related to them the events of the past, that next came their mistresses ; and here my task was easier still. Nothing relating to themselves, and those about them, but what I was as well acquainted with as they were ; and a glorious opportunity had I of paying off my old scores ; as for those who had offended me, no good service did I do them with their liege ladies. Little Jermyn, in particular, I painted in none of the brightest colours, whereas, after describing Jabot to the life, and accusing him of every virtue under the sun, I sent that proud little blue-eyed Jennings away, almost broken hearted, by telling her that *he* was the

only one of her lovers that really loved her, but promised, by way of consolation, to show her, on that day week, all her suitors within a magic mirror, and resort to an infallible spell, for discovering which was the most sincere. I managed this part of the business easily enough, by getting full length transparent likenesses of all the people about court painted, (both men and women,) and then shifting them, as occasion required, in and out of the frame of a large looking-glass; so that when a light was placed behind them, they had the most perfect, yet shadowy appearance. imaginable, whilst to give a greater air of magic to the machinery, I got from José Corvo, the queen's Jew perfumer, some essence, which, when a few drops of it were dropt on fire, filled the room with volumes of blue, and highly perfumed smoke; then came the spell for putting lover's truth to the test; my friend Corvo had also furnished me with

an adequate number of pastille hearts, made of mock amulet, black enough, it is true, to have been the hearts of the imps of the inquisition ; some of these hearts were left quite dry, so that when put into a censer of fire, they lit instantly, but when lit, consumed slowly, and remained on fire a long time. These were intended to represent constant hearts, (it may be like thine, Ossory) that would burn, and burn for ever. Others I had perforated in all directions, (like thine and mine, Buckingham,) which, from being so perforated, would ignite in a moment, but the flame was almost as quickly extinguished as it had been kindled ; — the third and last class I had steeped in a preparation of ambergris, (that the sagacious Corvo had provided me with,) which caused a light brilliant flame to play continually on their surface, or rather a series of them, for they evaporated soon ; but the ambergris effectually prevented the fire from penetrating, and

consequently, the heart from consuming. All things being thus prepared, the expectant nymphs arrived — and, one at a time, they entered to consult me on their destinies — and an awful-looking personage I was, gorgeously apparelled in my magician's robes, which were very long, of white velvet, with a black tunic ; round my waist, a girdle of twisted silver snakes ; on my head was a veil of silver tissue, that descended as far as my eyes, and was bound round the forehead with a wreath of deadly night-shade ; a milk-white beard flowed to my waist ; my wand was a long crystal prism, which, when the sun was upon it, looked like a meteor ; one foot rested on a globe ; by my side stood Eden Green, with a proper degree of deformity saddled on him ; the canopy of my throne was upheld by the Fates, whose eyes I had so constructed, that on touching a spring, they should move, and even weep, which was contrived by Eden Green's putting water

in their sockets. The yarn that Lachesis was spinning had in it some threads of gold, some of silver, some of a bright rose-colour ; some chequered with gold, silver, rose and black ; but a greater number that were black altogether, whilst the glittering weapon of Atropos looked frightfully keen, and eager to destroy her sister's work ; on each arm of my throne sat, in sleepy state, an enormous Denmark owl. After having duly astounded my votaries as to the past, I proceeded to enlighten them as to the future ; and before the eyes of the enquiring damsel, (raising a sufficient quantity of smoke,) I paraded the effigy of every cavalier that had ever said a civil thing to her, dropping a heart into the censer before each, as he past, and telling the lady before hand, that whatever form a heart should burn the longest at, *that* was the cavalier who loved her best ; you may be sure I always took care that one of the *semper eadem* hearts

should consume before the hero I pleased or she pleased, just as it might happen; therefore, you cannot wonder that I soon had on my list the names of Brooks, Stewart, Hamilton, Roberts, Middleton, Castlemain, Chesterfield, Temple, Jennings, Blague, Price, Warmestré, Hyde, Denham, Wetenhall, Southesk, besides a thousand others, even to that frightful Portuguese countess of Panétra; to whom, however, I had the charity to pourtray Jaurauvédez, even telling her the initials of his hundred and fifty names, Pedro Francisco, Correro de Silva, &c. &c. &c., and moreover, that a wicked man (meaning thee, Bucks,) had actually nick-named him out of the kingdom — so much for poor “*Peter of the Wood.*”

“Here’s to him,” said Buckingham, laughing, and filling another cup of wine. “You must have had a rare merry time of it,” continued the duke, “but I

wonder you bore the confinement so patiently?"

"Confinement," echoed Rochester, "why, not a day past but I was at Spring-gardens, or the theatre, or the Mall; and many a time my link has had the honour of lighting your grace's chair; and though I always conduced in some manner, either to your comfort or amusement, (witness to-day at Greenwich,) yet, because my clothes were not of the finest, none of you would notice me; but thou, George, may'st do me good service yet, if thou wilt. The day after to-morrow I shall have more importations from Whitehall than I can possibly attend to. Now I have initiated thee into all the mysteries of my art, all that is necessary to make thee as good a conjurer as myself, is to put on one of my dresses — wilt thou? and come for one day only, and help me to make destinies for these nymphs?"

"Will I?" cried Buckingham, rubbing

his hands with delight ; “ ay, for twenty days, if it is thy wish ; but art thou sure, John, my nerves can stand the horrors of thy den ? ”

“ The horrors,” said Rochester, “ are all concentrated in my own person, for my den, albeit unlike a den, is worthy of the court of Paphos.”

“ Pray then,” said Lord Ossory, “ let me go as the duke’s coadjutor ? ”

“ Ay, truly, provided you remain in ambush, and come not forward to betray or be betrayed,” said Rochester ; “ but, by the way, we have not yet asked you concerning the French beauties ; — is La Vallière such a divinity ? and Montespan such a houri as they would lead us to believe ? ”

“ The duchess,” replied the young earl, “ has as much mere mortal loveliness as a woman well can have, and the marchioness is a splendid creature, that might, at any time, be mistaken for Juno, is there wanting in them both that

soul which sheds a halo round beauty, and creates a charm even where no other exists; they want, too, those eyes which speak, and whose language is light."

"In fact, Sir Critic," interrupted Buckingham, "they want the eyes of the Lady Cordelia Trevillion."

"I sought not for eyes like those of the lady you mention," said Lord Ossory, with a look meant to be that of pride; but his flushed cheek and downcast eye belied his lip of scorn.

"Woo!" said the duke, "I cry you mercy, for so unwarrantable a conjecture, though methinks my pardon should be granted, since the very mention of it has made you look two inches taller; indeed, now that I find *that* lady's eyes and your thoughts are strangers to one another, my conscience begins to smite me for having grudged Sedley every look they cast on him."

"Why, were they so numerous?" asked the young earl, with a forced

smile, that looked like pain in a mask of pleasure, too transparent to conceal one of her features.

"I did not count them," replied the duke, "(though it would have been a pretty pastime enough, had I thought of it,) and Sedley might have found it beyond his arithmetical skill." Lord Ossory groaned, and Buckingham, satisfied that he had tormented him enough for one night, turned to his other guest — saying — "but à propos of eyes, Rochester, two such brilliants as have arrived since you have been away, stars might not shine, not shine beside them."

"Tell me, by what name I am to adore their owner?" said Rochester.

"Berry," replied the duke; "she is the wife of as strange a piece of mortality as nature in her wildest freak ever produced; a Sir Ambrose Templeton,"

"Then, how came he by such a gem?" enquired the earl. "Why the fates helped him to her; for know that thou

art a fool to him in astrology. She was the daughter of a peasant, whom in her infancy he had adopted; but reading in the stars that he was one day to espouse her, he spirited her away, (as the story goes,) but by some lucky fatality, which always attends heroes and heroines, she got under the protection of the baronet's brother; who, when she grew up, (his wife having civilly died out of the way) was for marrying her; all was settled, when, lo! just as the ceremony was going to take place, the redoubtable Sir Ambrose made his appearance, and in a fit of laudable caprice claimed the fair bride as his own! all was anarchy and confusion, but the utmost his skill could achieve, was cheating his brother out of a wife without getting her for himself; for as legends tell, he presented a ring to the inflexible fair one, who most ungraciously flung it into a river, saying, that when it was found, she would marry him, and not till then. In due time she

married Sir John Berry—who in undue time died; when, again meeting with her magician-like lover, Sir Ambrose, before she had doffed her weeds for her husband, (whose name she is obliged to retain,) it so chanced that they dined together—and being by him helped to a treat, what was her consternation on opening the fish at discovering the ring! that very ring which she had consigned to the bright waters of a running river, which, however, having run counter to her wishes, she had no alternative but to marry the old astrologer, and here ends my tale.”

“ ’Tis a strange one,” said Rochester; “but could we not manage to get the old gentleman to Tower Street, and between us both manufacture for him a destiny, the very anticipation of which would cause him to fulfil it;—and so give some of the young fellows about court (Ossory for instance) a chance of the reversion of his beautiful wife.”

"No bad plan," said Buckingham, laughing; "and I think I could manage it." —

Here they were interrupted by a knocking at the door; and the duke having bid the person without enter — Eden Green appeared in a gay suit of blue and silver, a black velvet hat with three heron's plumes, — his guitar slung across his breast, — a sealed packet in one hand, and a basket, containing the apparel for which he had been dispatched, in the other; depositing it on the ground, he presented the packet to his master. — When Rochester had broken the seal, and was examining the contents, Buckingham pointed to a cover, and bid the page be seated.

"Your grace does me too much honour," replied the boy, "but I have already supped." — "Even so," said the duke, "thou wilt not refuse to drink our healths, Master Eden—but where is the Burgundy? I do not see it."

"This looks like it, my lord," said Eden Green, reaching a flask from the other end of the table.

"*Nullum simile quod idem est*," said the duke laughing, as he filled out a cup of wine, and gave it to the page, "at least so thy wisdom told me this morning, — and thou hast proved it, for thou art one and the same with the dwarf and Signor Zingaro, and yet art by no means like either, — but it is strange withal thou should'st like to live like a vagabond."

"*Exemplo plus quam ratione vivimus*," shrugged Master Eden, with an arch look at the duke and his master of mingled impertinence and mock humility. —

"Pray, Master Malapert," said the duke, "didst thou get thy Latin with thy effrontery, from nature? or does thy master give thee his cast-off classics, with his cast-off clothes?"

"So, please your grace," said the

urchin, with a face of most unmeaning meaning, "I came honestly by it, having spent a portion of time (my sole inheritance) to purchase it."

"'Tis pity then thou art so lavish of it, if thou bought it at so dear a rate," said the duke. —

"'Fore George," cried Rochester, bursting into a laugh, and holding out a letter he had just finished reading, — "if here is not an epistle from the husband of your beauty; in fact, from the most worthy and most wonderful Sir Ambrose Templeton, addressed to '*The most worthy the Signor Pietro di Manfredi*,' my astrological title, but hear what he says : —"

"Whitehall, Monday.

"Respected Sir,

"Though almost a stranger in this city, yet sufficiently long hath been my sojourn for your fame to have reached my ears; a fame as high, (and doubtless

as just,) as the heavens from whence it takes its source. — As free or radiant caloric, (called in the vulgar tongue heat of temperature,) comprehends all heat which is perceptible to the senses, and affects the thermometer, so the glorious science of astrology comprehends all the events incident to humanity, and reveals to mortal eyes those features of their destinies which are shrouded in the dark veil of futurity ! — I wish, respected sir, to consult you on the science in general, and on matters touching my own individual horoscope in particular ;—furthermore I shall not now encroach on your valuable time, beyond a request to know what day and what hour it will be most pleasurable to you to see me ; if it interfere not with your more important avocations, I would, if possible, evitate a distant epoch for the interview ; for as a lighted taper placed in water causes the oxygen to be destroyed, or rather decomposed by its combustion, till it

dilates the air, and produces a certain quantum of carbonic acid, —kindled thus the desire in me to commune with one who has raised the veil of futurity higher than any other has ever yet done, has dilated my mind with an enthusiasm, which has produced a degree of impatience to behold the Signor Pietro di Manfredati, that can neither be concealed or expressed

By his very devoted,
and very humble servant to command,
AMBROSE TEMPLETON.”

Long and loud was the laughter the perusal of this epistle occasioned to all present. — “*Quoi faire ?*” said Rochester, “shall I profess equal impatience to behold my brother astrologer, and pretend *his* fame has reached me, or at once put on the great man, and plead lack of time as an excuse for not seeing him till the end of the week ?”

“Oh, the latter by all means,” said Buckingham.

“Then to put him out of suspense about the honour of an audience with me, I’ll e’en favour him with my written pleasure on the subject ; so now for the ‘appliances and means to boot,’ Master Eden,” said Rochester ; and accordingly Master Eden turned to the basket he had brought, and taking up his leopard-skin garment, touched a spring, which caused the hump to open, and discover a plentiful supply of writing materials, from which his master selected a thin and very yellow looking sheet of parchment, on which he wrote as follows : —

“Through my interpreter and writer, Ginseppe Andare, I, Pierro di Manfredati, professor of the occult sciences, send greeting to Ambrose Templeton, by men called “Sir Ambrose,” and from the number of previous applicants can hold no parley with the said Ambrose, or

“Sir Ambrose,” before the day antecedent to the next sabbath, when (God willing, for *astra regunt homines, sed regit astra Deus,*) I shall expound to him all such mysteries as he may wish to master. — Good speed the while —

PIETRO DI MANFREDATI.”

Given under my hand and
seal, this Twelfth day of
May, anno Domini, 1666,
Tower Street, London.

To this oracular autograph was affixed a large square seal in green wax, on which was inscribed some Egyptian hieroglyphics, that looked a great deal, but might have meant nothing.

“We can leave this precious communication,” said Rochester, laughing as he folded it up, “at Whitehall Place to-night as we pass; Eden Green shall give it to the porter, in his leopard-skin dress. — The knight of course will be

minute in his inquiries as to who brought it ; when the porter no doubt will affirm, that the bearer was an imp, from the other side of the Styx."

" A likely appearance enough for him to have," said the duke, " considering from whom he comes, *aut Rochester es aut Diabolus* ; at all events thou wilt play the d—l to night, if not at Whitehall, before the sand runs out another hour ; so to thy toilette, and whilst thou art getting under that outlandish garb, Master Eden will sing us a song."

" Do," said Rochester, turning to the boy, " and let it be that one the Lady Dorothy Sidney's page taught thee when we were at Penshurst." — Master Eden cast down his eyes, looked sentimental, played a light prelude on his guitar, and sang the following song : —

The moon is up in night, lady,
My bark rides on the sea,
The winds blow fair and light, lady,
To waft me far from thee.

I would that I could take, lady,
The heart that once was mine;
Yet no — that heart may break, lady,
But it will still be thine.

Tho' thou art like a star, lady,
That sparkles from above;
Too bright, too high, too far, lady,
To heed such lowly love.

Yet thou hast lit my path, lady,
And still my guide shall be;
Tho' now away in wrath, lady,
Thy light is turned from me.

Thou bidst me cease my sighs, lady,
I hush'd them from thine ear;
But my less docile eyes, lady,
Still told thee thou wert dear.

Thou bidst me wake my lyre, lady,
To other themes save thee;
I tried — and found each wire, lady,
But knew love's symphony!

Then silent be my lute, lady,
My heart shall be the same;
Their chords must all be mute, lady,
Or vibrate to thy name.

But hence I'll haste away, lady,
Our parting hour be now;
Why cloud-like should I stay, lady,
To darken that fair brow?

Farewell ! and when yon light, lady,
Is sailing o'er thy bower,
Some distant summer night, lady,
Remember thou this hour.

And when o'er yon blue wave, lady,
Cold wintry winds shall breathe,
Remember him whose grave, lady,
Perchance will be beneath.

“ Bravo ! bravo ! bravo ! ” echoed the three peers. “ Bravo,” repeated the duke, “ sung *con amore* ; ” why, thou dost not look as if ten summers had rolled over thee, but thy master says thou art fifteen, yet might one shut their eyes and think thee twenty.” — When Rochester was equipped, his page was not long trans-migrating into the deformed dwarf ; and even those who had marked the progress of their toilettes, could with difficulty believe them to be the same persons they had seen a few minutes before, so complete was the disguise, — each having enveloped themselves in a large Spanish cloak that entirely concealed their dress.

Buckingham removed a shield and battle-axe that hung against one of the pillars, and took down a large and curiously wrought brass key that had been suspended underneath.

“ This,” said he, “ is the key of the gate at the end of the terrace, and now, my lords, proceed we to the charge,” opening, as he spoke, an invisible door between one of the windows; — “ but,” turning round, he said to Lord Ossory’s dog, who with true canine politeness had retreated back a few steps to let the rest of the company proceed, wagging his tail courteously to them as they passed, “ Leo, you are not to come with us, but, poor fellow, you are not to go without your supper either;” saying which, he patted the chair he had previously occupied at table, for the dog to jump into, which he did instantly; and the duke, placing a fowl on a golden plate before him, and a large tankard of water beside him, left him in full pos-

session of the remains of the banquet, saying, as he closed the door after himself and his friends, "Mind, sir, not a word of any thing that you have seen or heard to-night, — Do you hear, Mr. Bow-wow," he added (seeing the dog was intent on his supper); upon which Leo (first placing one paw on the chicken by way of protection,) looked towards the duke, as if to promise assent. — The trio soon gained the iron gate at the end of the terrace, upon opening which, they found themselves in the street, within five minutes walk of the palace.

CHAP. XIV.

“Now,” said the duke, when they had arrived at Whitehall, “Ossory had better come with me as far as the ante-room, till I tell the king of his arrival ; but as for you, Rochester, you must manage your own business as you can ; for if old Rowly suspects that I have had any hand in pawning such a wolf in sheep’s clothing on him, there will be the d—I to pay ; and where the funds are to come from for the said purpose, I know not, as we are all too much in his debt at present, and I’m sure the privy purse cannot supply them, — salvation in that quarter being already mortgaged twelve deep, so look to it, John, e’en as thou wilt.”

“Thanks, most trusty and well beloved counsellor,” said the earl, “but go thou and procure me the audience,

and never tax thy poor brains with conjectures as to the result ;” saying which, he began to sing in no very soprano voice, one of his own lampoons.

“ Here is a health to Kate,
Our sovereign’s mate,
Of the royal house of Lisbon ;
But the d—l take Hyde,
And the bishop beside,
That made her bone of his bone.”

“ For Heaven’s sake,” said the duke, leaning over the banisters, “ do you mean to ruin every thing by being so deuced careless ?”

“ As for that, if I *am careless*, why I have an additional claim on old oak-climber, as in that case, our genealogical tree would be much the same ; but for thy sake, gentle Bucks, I’ll be silent as an old maid’s parrot, a woman with a secret, or thine own tongue when big with a state plot that thyself hath conceived, and doth long to bring forth in face of the whole court.”

The duke did not wait for any more of this speech, but hurried up stairs to Miss Stewart's apartments, where the king was always to be found at that hour. "Who may be the party to-night, Andrew Wilford?" enquired he of one of the pages in waiting, whom he found in the ante-room, lightening one of his companion's pockets of a rouleau.

"His majesty," replied the obsequious Andrew, "is at play with the Chevalier de Gramont, Sir George Etherege, Lady Chesterfield, and my Lord Buckhurst; Miss Stewart, after waiting a whole hour for your grace, has, I believe, made Sir Charles Lyttleton deputy architect during your grace's absence, but I fancy *he* cannot manage *story* after *story*, as you do, my Lord Duke,* and therefore has not much to

* "It was impossible to have more beauty and less sense than this Frances Stewart, the king's favourite; her chief delight was in mimicry, and the construction of castles with packs of cards

build upon, if he counts upon her favour — hem !”

“ Pray,” interrupted the Duke, “ is the Duke of York here ?”

“ He is, my Lord.”

“ And whom may he be playing with ?”

“ I believe Miss Jennings is playing with him,” replied the sapient Andrew, with a look, in which knave and fool were so happily blended, as to render it a matter of impossibility to decide which predominated.

“ Ha ! ha ! ha !” laughed the giddy duke, and then turning to Wilford, and arranging his George and Garter with one hand, while he took Lord Ossory by the other, said —

“ My honest Andrew, I leave this young nobleman in your especial keep-

which the Duke of Buckingham used to erect for her ; and so gained her favour above all others. Vide Andrew Marvel's Works.

ing, till I return to claim him, or it may be to reclaim him, since he will of necessity pass half an hour in thy company, time enough, albeit, to corrupt twenty less incorruptible youths than he is; and now, Worthy Will, do thine office."

Master Wilford made a low and patronizing bow to Lord Ossory, and then threw open the gilded doors to let the duke enter. At one table sat the merry monarch at cards with the party Andrew Wilford had described, and at another, the fair Stewart, swinging a pearl rosary to and fro with one hand, whilst on the other leant a head, which, had the Grecian artists seen, would have saved them the trouble of seeking in many, the model of that Helen, they might have here found in one; her beautiful but unmeaning eyes seemed undecided, whether to cast glances of displeasure at the artificer of the card mansion before her, or looks of admiration at her own foot (the prettiest

in the world,) which was busily employed in trying to depose *Ninon* from an eider-down cushion, of which she monopolized more than the owner of the pretty foot in question thought fair; but all in vain; every *coup de pied* *Ninon* repaid by a somewhat bolder attack on the brilliants that clasped the little white satin slipper that assailed her; till wearied with the unequal contest, the forgiving beauty exclaimed, "*Ninon, mon ange, embrasse ta maman,*" upon which, *Ninon* sprang into her lap, and placing her two snowy paws on a neck that rivalled them, did as she was desired. "Tush!" said she to Sir Charles Lyttleton, who had been *faisant son possible* to please her, which he found to be impossible.

"You cannot build a castle as high as my hand; I must wait for the Duke of Buckingham; I hope he'll come; but I think he will, don't you, *Ninon*? but I must comb your pretty ears," she continued, reaching a golden comb studded

with emeralds from a *chiffonière* that stood near her, that you may look nice for him, if he does, because he is so fond of you, and was so good to you to-day at Greenwich.

“Ah!” cried the Chevalier de Gramont, “*que je voudrait bien être coiffer à la Ninon!*”

“There are certainly different ways of being made happy,” observed Lord Chesterfield, with a sneer, as he stood behind his wife’s chair, and then thinking to pique *her*, by drawing her attention to the devoted persecution her *ci-devant* adorer, the Duke of York, was inflicting on the fair Jennings, added, addressing her, and glancing at him, “Who do you think the happiest man in the world?”

“Really, my Lord,” said the greenstockinged beauty, with a contemptuous curl of her pretty lip, “I can only give you the same answer that *Solon* gave *Cræsus* to a similar question. “*When you are dead,*” (she continued, fixing her

large eyes full on the Chevalier de Gramont,) "*I shall be able to determine.*"

The sapient earl, not finding the solution to his query the most agreeable in the world, had recourse to an expedient often resorted to by persons in similar situations, that of becoming the herald of some intelligence which the eyes and ears of every body present had already acquainted them with; and the Duke of Bucks having had the kindness to make his appearance just at this juncture, his lordship, perpetrating one of his most amiable smiles, turned to Miss Stewart, and said,

"Fair Lady, see how the fates wait upon your wishes; here *is* the Duke of Buckingham."

"Oh! I'm *so* glad," she cried, almost running to meet him. "But have you found that queer man? And, above all, have you brought the dwarf? And will you build me a castle with *three* packs

of cards, because Sir Charles Lyttleton says it's impossible, and I said, I knew *you* could do it?" And looking at the knight with the pettishness of a half triumphant, half disappointed spoilt child, as she concluded this brilliant harangue, she threw herself back in her chair, and laughed like a baby.

"I *have* found that queer man, Lady," (said the duke,) "I *have* brought the dwarf, and I *will* build you a castle with three packs of cards."

"Oh! nice, nice!" said the Stewart, clapping her hands with delight; "but where are they?" she continued, taking the duke by the arm, and looking round him.

"Not in my pocket," laughed his grace; "but if it be his majesty's pleasure, they shall be here anon."

"Odds fish!" cried the king, laying down his cards, "and have you really found them? why, George, all the Sir Hildebrands, Sir Caulines, and Sir Tris-

trams may hide their diminished heads, for thou art the very prince of knights errant; and now for the mystery of the medal, though 'tis easily guessed at; no doubt some graceless knave, who wishes for the honour, and still more for the profit of being our prime jester; but where are the varlets? We will e'en see them, and let them have their humour."

The duke whispered something in the king's ear.

"Bravely executed," said the latter, rising, "we will see him directly — and in the mean time you may bring the conjuror, and his coadjutor the dwarf here."

Saying which, the monarch and the duke left the room together; the former to give an audience to Lord Ossory, the latter to conduct Rochester and his wily page to Miss Stewart's apartments. — He was not long in finding them; and so completely changed was the earl's voice and manner, that even the Duke

of Buckingham was scarcely certain of his identity, as he ushered him into the room, where a crowd of his most intimate associates gathered round him, staring at him with all the wonder novelty excites, and never once dreaming that they were entitled to claim any of the privileges of acquaintanceship with the formidable looking personage before them ; — he entered at a most preposterously dignified pace, whilst the dwarf tumbled before him, with a rapidity of motion that baffled all attempts at discovering whether his evolutions were the effects of mechanism, or the dexterity of a human being. After having, in this manner, made the tour of the room, he came opposite the fair Stewart, and commenced a series of antics, that threw her into convulsions of laughter, till his master struck his wand three times heavily on the ground, when he instantly sprang upon his feet, and throwing up his cap and bells, turned his back to

Miss Stewart, and made her an inverse bow, almost to the very ground. After which, he remained as motionless, and as mute, as if he had been but a copy of humanity.

“How now, will you not let these ladies hear your voice vent itself in a song, Sirrah, since you will not condescend to breathe it into speech?” said the duke of Bucks; but the dwarf made no other answer, than by shaking his head, and placing his cap on the duke’s.

“’Twere a pity,” said the latter, returning it to him, “that I should deprive one of it, whom it becomes so well, especially as it does not fit *me*.”

“It only requires to be made *greater*,” replied the dwarf, untying a string, and again placing it on the duke’s head—who good humouredly said, “he perceived it.”

“*Dulce est decipere in loco*,” said Lord Arlington.

“A very good maxim that,” returned

the duke, "for a chamberlain, who *is* in place ; but the *in loco*, my good lord, makes all the difference, and I who am not in place" — "have the more merit," interposed the Chevalier de Gramont, "in playing the fool in *all places*." "Done, then," cried the duke, with the most inimitable *sang froid*, "I'll *play you for* a thousand, till the king returns."

They were scarcely seated, when the dwarf sprang forward, and seizing all the cards upon the table, placed himself at Miss Stewart's feet, and began erecting a castle, which, to her infinite astonishment, he soon completed with five packs of cards ; nothing could have kept her delight within bounds, but the fear of destroying the dwarf's handy-work, which now stood far above his head ; — in the midst of the praises, she was bestowing on the little architect, the king returned ; who seemed, to the full, as

much diverted with the two mountebanks, as his silly favourite.

“ Well, thou king of conjurers,” said he, addressing Lord Rochester, “ and what may thy pleasure be with us ? ”

“ To know *yours*, my liege,” replied the earl.

“ How now, speakest thou always in riddles, Sir Knave ? — or it may be that we take thee wrongly — and thou wouldst merely know, if we were fairly caught in the trap which thy wisdom laid for us this morning ; a trap, forsooth, of most classical origin ; thou wert no fool though ; a bait that could entrap a fair nymph, was the one of all others to suit us — but for our pleasure — ”

“ Ask him to sing ? ” whispered the Stewart, who stood at his elbow — “ it must be so funny to hear him.”

“ Dost thou, or thy prime minister there, know ought of music ? ” continued the king ; “ if so, it may go far to win thy cause.”

The earl made a sign to Eden Green,
who, in his best voice, instantly sang the
following song : —

“ When love with unconfined wings
Hovers within my gates,
And my divine Althea brings
To whisper at my grates ;
When I lye tangled in her haire,
And fetter'd with her eye,
The birds that wanton in the aire
Know no such libertie.

“ When flowing cups run swiftly round
With no allaying Thames,
Our careless heads with roses crown'd,
Our hearts with loyal flames ;
When thirsty griefe in wine we steepe,
When healths and draughts go free.
Fishes that tipple in the dee pe,
Know no such libertie.

“ When linnet-like confined, I
With shriller note shall sing
The mercye, sweetnesse, majesty,
And glories of my king ;
When I shall voyce aloud how good
He is, how great should be,
Th' enlarged windes, that curle the flood,
Know no such libertie.

“ Stone wals do not a prison make,
Nor iron barres a cage ;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for a hermitage :
If I have freedom in my love,
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone, that soar above,
Enjoy such libertie.” *

“ Our favourite song, by the law
Harry,” cried the king, “and for that
same thy boon shall be granted ; even
were it to the amount of a pension that
should frighten thy father-in-law into an

* This sonnet, which possessed a high degree of fame among the old cavaliers, was written by Colonel Richard Lovelace, during his confinement in the Gatehouse, Westminster ; to which he was committed by the House of Commons, in April 1642, for presenting a petition from the county of Kent, requesting them to restore the king to his rights, and to settle the government. This song was, therefore, a great favourite with Charles the Second. See Wood’s *Athenæ*, vol. ii. p. 228. ; where may be seen at large the affecting story of this writer ; who, after having been distinguished for every gallant and polite accomplishment, the pattern of his own sex, and the admiration of the other, died in the lowest wretchedness, obscurity, and want in 1658. This song was entitled, “ To Althea from Prison.”

ague, brother, (turning to the Duke of York) or to the pardoning of the greatest rascal in our dominions, to the outraging of christian charity in all our bishops."

"Now then," said Lord Rochester, resuming his own voice, and throwing off his masquerade, to the astonishment of all present, and more especially to that of the king, "now that I have your majesty's most gracious promise of pardon, I need no longer this disguise; for the most loyal shape in which I could have the happiness to appear before you, Sire, is that of my own proper person."

"My Lord Rochester," said the king haughtily, "you are not, we perceive, yet cured of carrying your jests too far. We hold ourselves bound to the fulfilment of no promise extorted from us under false pretences; and therefore, we acknowledge *none to you.*"

"Were your majesty's memory, (re-

plied the earl, still kneeling, and looking up at the king with an expression comically awful,) were your majesty's memory as good as your mercy is great, you would acknowledge yourself bound, Sire, even by the most *unequivocal* promise to pardon *me*."

" Prove it, (said the king,) and, worthless as you may be, you shall not have it to say that Charles Stuart broke his word."

" I would appeal to this fair company," said Lord Rochester, with a look meant to be that of triumphant virtue, " if your majesty did not, but five minutes since, in the abundance of your goodness aver, when yonder knave had finished that brave old cavalier song of Colonel Lovelace's, (God rest his loyal soul,) that for the sake of it, you would grant any boon we might ask — even to the pardoning of "*the greatest rascal in your dominions*," and *as such*, (he concluded, with downcast eyes, and a look of disclaiming mo-

desty,) I do not think I arrogate too much to myself, in claiming the fulfilment of your royal promise."

The frown which had lowered upon the king's brow, was obliged to yield to the scarcely suppressed laugh Lord Rochester's appeal had forced from all those to whom it was made ; and after his own mirth had subsided sufficiently to allow him to speak, he placed his hand on the earl's shoulder — exclaiming : —

" Look ye, my lords, a miracle ! Rochester has spoken the truth, and as it is only fair that one miracle should work another, he has our pardon ; and verily, from the way we were inclined towards him not two hours since, nothing short of a miracle could have obtained it for him ; but see that a wonder so great as that of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, having once in his life spoken the truth, be duly chronicled among the remarkable events of our reign ; but George," he continued, turning to the

duke of Bucks, "we think we owe thee a grudge, if thou knewest this white-washed jackdaw under his borrowed plumes?"

"Your majesty," replied the duke, "I think will acquit me of knowing Rochester, when he is so changed as to *know himself*."

"True, true," laughed the king; "but how comes it, Rochester, that we have heard nothing of thee during the whole time we have not seen thee? We knew thou wert not dead; because, had that been the case, England would have been, for a second time, edified with public thanksgiving for the plague of London having ceased."

"*Nunquam mores quos extuli refero, aliquid ex eo quod composui turbatur: aliquid ex his quæ fugavi, redit;*" saith Seneca, "and I aim not at going beyond him; but if your majesty have any curiosity to know how I employed my genius whilst retired from the busy world,

(a genius that renovated greatly in the solitude into which my mournful exile plunged me,) I have kept a diary, which is, Sire, as the author ever has been, at your service." Saying which, he beckoned to Eden Green, and touching the spring of his hump, to the no small amusement of every one present, drew from it a somewhat voluminous MS. The king was much diverted at this new style of *escritoir*; and turning to the Chevalier de Gramont said: —

"Chevalier, I do not think that even in France, they could have invented any thing more ingenious; is it not very extraordinary?"

"*Point du tout, Sire,*" replied the chevalier; "*sans doute,* (placing his hand on the diary,) "*il y'en a bien assez là dedans, pour donner des bosse à tout le monde.*"

"*Parbleu! je le crois bien, vous avez raison, chevalier,*" said the king, laughing immoderately. "We expect to be much

improved, Rochester, by the perusal of this said diary of thine ; as we firmly believe in the efficacy of the Spartan method of correcting errors ; but it is now late — so go thy way, John.”

“ So, please your majesty, and what way may that be ?” enquired the earl.

“ Even the way thou hast always gone ; to the d — l,” said the king.

“ *A revoir* then, *mon prince*,” muttered Rochester, as he bowed out of the apartment.

“ I have always heard, (said the Duke of Buckingham, when he and the earl found themselves in the street,) that fortune favoured fools ; but I never knew her to favour knaves, as she has done thee to-day, John.”

“ Ah,” replied his companion, “ that is because I was flanked by a —— ; but I thank thee, George, for the part thou hast taken in this day’s destiny ; but remember thou dost not fail me in Tower-

street the day after to-morrow ; and now fare thee well."

" Had you not better remain with me for the rest of the night, as it is now very late ?" said the duke.

" No, no, this has been a day of miracles ; besides, it would not be politic to disobey so soon after getting into favour — and didst not hear old Rowly tell me to go to the d—l ? so I'll even do his bidding, and go home to Lady Rochester."

Having arrived at York-place, these worthies exchanged adieus, and separated for the night.

CHAP. XV.

LADY Cordelia, from the agitation and excitement she had suffered by the persecution of Sir Charles Sedley, did not miss her gold chain, this really *gage d'amour*, till she arrived at home; and was in despair when she found it actually gone. To this chain was affixed a golden heart, containing in its core a lock of pale chesnut hair, more precious to her than existence, and which in its loss seemed now to extinguish the only spark of joy to light her way through life. — Alone, unfriended, unbeloved by him whose love she prized, this solitary relic alone remained of all that was dear to her on earth. It had proved her solace in many an hour of sadness. Her grief and despair were boundless.

By dawn of day she traversed Green-

wich Park in every direction ; all search was vain ; the heart and chain were gone for ever.

Rebecca, on the former evening, remarked with wonder and surprise the changed appearance of Lady Cordelia on her joining her. Though not prone to suspicion, yet the evident traces of tears, her flushed cheek, and agitated frame, made Rebecca gaze on her with a look of anxious and enquiring curiosity, as imagining that she had got rid of her to fulfil an appointment with Sir Charles Sedley, whom she had seen walk abruptly from her with hurried step.

Lady Cordelia remained silent, but was obliged to take Lady Berry's arm for support ; she trembled so violently. — " You are ill, dearest Lady Cordelia," said Rebecca, with concern ; " something has flurried you ; was it quite right," she added, timidly, " to choose a solitary bench in so public and gay a

spot as Greenwich Park for your *séjour* at this hour of night?"

"Not quite," she returned, with a heavy sigh; "but, on honour, I had made no assignation; though certainly I have been tormented by that court-fly Sir Charles Sedley."

Rebecca made no reply.

Lady Cordelia said, in a hurried accent, "It is late; we had better take boat instead of joining the gay throng, and return to Whitehall directly."

"Certainly," Rebecca replied. "I left Sir Ambrose engaged in his laboratory; but it is full time I was at home."

They were soon landed at Whitehall, where the friends separated.

Early on the following morning Rebecca, whose anxiety respecting the Lady Cordelia had never slept, paid her an early visit; she found her just returned from Greenwich, and lying on a couch in a state of such grief and despondency, she regarded her with sincere pity.

Lady Cordelia at length raising her head from the pillow on which it rested, exclaimed, "You look so placid, so happy, dear Lady Berry, how I envy you. She kindly pressed Rebecca's hand, adding with a look of anguish, and a suppressed sigh, "but you are so good."

"Are you not happy?" she returned—
"Oh, no!" she exclaimed, tears flowing from her eyes.

"Why are you not happy," dear lady; "have you not every thing to make you—youth, loveliness, rank, splendour, adulation."

"Do you think," she eagerly interrupted, "such paltry possessions constitute the felicity of life? Listen," she continued, "to the cold, heartless, unfeeling, and they may tell you so; — but listen to one of ardent feelings, sensitively alive to kindness, and more than equally so to unkindness, and I will tell you, from sad experience, that riches,

splendour, rank, nay even beauty, are all inadequate, when the heart is broken.

“Such,” she continued, in a paroxism of despair, “has been my fate through life, that whatever I have loved and cherished with peculiar fondness, I have been deprived of from some unlucky fatality, as in the present instance. Mine has proved a destiny impossible to avert.”

“Oh, talk not thus wildly,” cried Rebecca, greatly shocked, and sighing deeply. “It is mistrusting an overruling Providence.”

“Quite the contrary,” replied the lady. “It is a proof of the greatest reliance on Providence. Is it not presumptuous in us to suppose, by any precaution of our own we can avert the will of heaven? Remember, I do not mean that we are wilfully to err; that would, indeed, be wicked; but what is pre-ordained, can we prevent? Answer me that question,” fixing her eyes with earnestness on Lady Berry.

“I believe,” she answered, with timid apprehension, “that we are so peculiarly the care of the great Omnipotent, that as he wisely orders, so we, the creatures of his overruling power, must be regulated by that power, which only knows what is best for us. To submit to that will can alone render us worthy his immediate and ever watchful protection.

“But this,” she added gravely, “is, dear Lady Cordelia, a subject so far beyond my comprehension — so deep — so awful — so undefinable, it is best at once to drop it.”

The lady remained pensive and silent; at length Rebecca cast her eyes towards a broken guitar, which hung suspended by a ribbon to the wainscot.

“I would ask you to sing,” she exclaimed, “but your instrument, like your heart, has ceased to vibrate to the touch of joy.”

“How true!”

Lady Cordelia rose from the couch,

and went to the harpsichord, which she touched, accompanying with her voice, in a low, rich, pathetic strain, the following air, the poetical effusion of the moment:

“ My lyre is like to me, — neglected ;
A useless burthen now it stands ;
By all who once admired — rejected,
The sport and scorn of vulgar hands.

“ Time was, when deck'd with ribbons rare,
Across the bosom it was hung ;
And only touch'd with tend'rest care,
It answer'd to the voice that sung.

“ But now, for all its charms are o'er,
Of former talent but the token ;
Its sweetest sounds are heard no more —
Its chords are — as my heart is — broken.”*

The tender, soft melody of the above pathetic little air, the plaintiveness of the words, and the melting tone with which it was sung, powerfully affected Rebecca, as, with tearful eyes, she regarded the lady.

With her caressing manner, she ex-

* The author is indebted to Lady Caroline Lamb for the very beautiful lines here inserted.

claimed, "You pity me, you feel for me, dear Lady Berry," as she pressed her to her heart.

"Is it possible to do otherwise when I see your grief; and from whatever cause it springs, dear Lady Cordelia, allow me to become a participator; confide in me and disclose it."

"Never!" she interrupted vehemently. "That were indeed to betray my weakness. — I am proud, Rebecca, nor shall the cause of all my sufferings triumph, though my heart should break."

Delicacy prevented her urging the subject further.

Music had a powerful influence over Lady Cordelia in soothing every turbulent feeling; though Lady Berry was not skilled in the science, yet she possessed sufficient taste to awaken pleasure by the tender sweetness of her voice. She went to the harpsichord, and, for the first time in her life, gave the following spontaneous effusion, to which she sang :

“ Alas ! that still this is the fate
Of hearts too fond, of lutes too soft ;
The pulse too fine, the chord too sweet,
Alas ! they make the fate they meet.
For ever heart or lute to pass
 A world so desolate and lone,
The lute-chords should be strung with steel,
 The heart-pulse should be turn’d to stone.
Weep for the heart — weep for the lute ;
 And would that weeping could restore
The sweetness of their former life,
 And bid the lone one weep no more.”*

When Rebecca ceased, Lady Cordelia hastily sprang from the couch, and in a tone of charmed rapture, cried, “ How beautiful ! oh, it is too beautiful ! ” as she kissed the glowing cheek of the fair Rebecca, who abashed, though gratified, now took leave.

* The above stanzas are from the pen of L. E. L. ; they were not intended to meet the public eye, but are too elegant a composition to be omitted.

CHAP. XVI.

LADY CORDELIA, young, beautiful, followed, and admired, was, at the age of nineteen, the idol of her parents, that is, their *pride* ; for parental love is often nothing more ; her father, the Earl of Dorset (of whom Bishop Burnet gives the following character), “was bountiful, even to running himself into difficulties, and charitable to a fault ; for he commonly gave all he had about him, when he met an object that moved him ; but he was so lazy, that though the king seemed to court him to be a favourite, he would not give himself the trouble that belonged to that post ; he hated the court, and despised the king, when he saw he was neither generous or tender hearted.”

Lord Orford also says of him, that

“ he was the finest gentleman of the voluptuous court of Charles the Second, and the gloomy one of King William ; he had as much wit as his first master, or his contemporaries Buckingham and Rochester, without the royal want of feeling, the duke’s want of principle, or the earl’s want of thought: the latter said with astonishment, ‘ that he did not know how it was, but Lord Dorset might do any thing, and yet was never to blame ;’ it was not that he was free from the failings of humanity, but he had the tenderness of it too ; which made everybody excuse whom every body loved, for even the asperity of his verses seems to have been forgiven to —

“The best good man, with the worst natured muse.”

The countess was what a wife should be, a counterpoise to the failings, (*anglicé*, weaknesses, amiabilities, and imprudencies of her husband,) in short, she was a complete *clever woman*. Am-

bitious, prudent, and political, one who never mortgaged future *interest* for *present pleasure*; she had brilliancy enough to dazzle, and solidity enough to avoid being dazzled; no one possessed to a greater degree that nucleus of policy, the art of crouching in order to spring; her study was human nature, and she had taken the only true method of gaining a thorough knowledge of this most abstruse of all sciences,—that of quelling and subduing her own feelings and passions, in order to watch and mould those of others to her purpose. Her *actions* always produced the *effect* of virtue; her *motives*, she took care none should analyze, not excepting herself; with fools she never shewed wisdom, (save the wisdom of concealing it;) with the wise she never betrayed folly. What *she* planned, she determined *others* should *execute*; but she always managed so as to make them give themselves full credit for the *will* as well as the deed,

thus avoiding the most unpardonable of all offences among weak minds, and shallow intellects, that of apparent superiority. She knew that those who would govern effectually, must conceal the sceptre of authority : but *consistency* was the great bulwark of her conduct, which precluded any one from doubting the soundness of her judgment, without, at the same time, questioning their own. Such was the brilliant, fascinating, but cold-hearted mother of Lady Cordelia, and as such, it was not surprising that *she* did not view with any very favourable eyes the increasing attachment of her daughter and the young Lord Ossory, whom fortune had not dealt quite so lavishly with as nature; yet do not let it be supposed, that she evinced any symptoms of coolness or displeasure towards him; on the contrary, none could show him more affectionate attention, even to an *apparently* maternal interest in his welfare; no wonder then,

that both equally deceived, the lovers should feel nothing but rapture in the present, and see nothing but happiness in the future; but there was a time that the wily countess knew must come, and then it was, that she looked for the accomplishment of her plans relative to her daughter; that time *did* come,—the time when the young earl was to leave England for Venice, at that period the ordeal of fashion, folly, and vice that every young man of note was obliged to pass through, before he was deemed eligible to breathe the *pure* atmosphere of the British Court.

It was a gloomy September evening, a funereal pageant of dark clouds almost obscured the rays of the setting sun as it beamed its last farewell to day. Lady Cordelia was sitting alone with her mother; not a word past between them, for each had their eyes fixed on an open volume, which neither read. “Ah!” thought Lady Cordelia, as she raised her’s

to the window, "*he* is going away, and the very heavens look sorrowful."

"I wonder," said the countess, at length breaking the silence, "that Ossory has not been here to-day; he surely would not go without wishing us good bye; besides, your father has some letters which he promised to take."

Her daughter made no reply; she could not; there was a tightness at her heart that almost overpowered her at the bare idea of her mother's ranking such a surmise within the pale of possibility; and yet, had she been in his place, she thought she would not spend elsewhere the time that might be passed with her; but *then*, his father *might* have detained him; he *might* have been obliged to go to Whitehall, and once there, it was, she knew, no easy matter to get away; in short, a thousand things *might* have happened. She was on the point of framing another conjecture, when the door opened, and "Lord Ossory" was an-

nounced. He was in his travelling dress, and looked pale and ill ; but Lady Cordelia only saw *him*, and felt that she loved him better then than when she had seen him look handsomer and happier, winning the admiration, and it might be, the love of thousands besides herself.

“ We — that is, I really thought you meant to go without seeing us,” said the countess, extending her hand to him.

“ Go without seeing you !” he replied, echoing her words, and looking at Cordelia, and then added, with a faint smile, “ how long is it since your ladyship has had reason to think me such a self-tormentor ?”

“ Oh, I don’t know,” said the lady with one of her most bewitching smiles ; “ but as you have a very sincere regard for us, I only thought you might be one of those romantic personages whose feelings are all frittered away in treble refined paroxysms of sentiment ; and so

thought the parting might be too much for you."

"No, certainly not, unless *you* do," said the earl, fixing his very expressive eyes on her with rather more meaning than she seemed willing to comprehend; for rising hastily, she said —

"My dear Ossory, excuse me for a few minutes, for I must go and see if the earl's letters are ready, and tell him that you are here, for you know you are such a favourite of his, that he would never forgive us, were we to let you go without seeing him; but you will sup with us, will you not?"

The earl assented, and her ladyship left the room.

"And is this really the last evening I shall be with you for a whole year?" said Lord Ossory, turning to Lady Cordelia.

"Cordelia," he continued, pressing her hand to his lips, as he knelt before her, "my own dear love, what hope am

I to take with me to live upon during this weary waste of time and absence?"

"Every hope — every wish of mine," said the weeping Cordelia; scarcely knowing what she said, and only feeling that all she loved best in the world, was about to leave her — perhaps, for ever! for who is there that has not felt (if they have felt at all) a parting scene forebode, that there would *never* be a future meeting? — who is there that, at such a moment, has not recalled the change that chance, and time, and distance have wrought for others? — then who is there that may dare to hope, time, chance, and change will be more merciful to them? I know not — but Cordelia was not one; her gloom deepened; so did the twilight; she was not sorry for it, for she would rather imagine her lover's features than see them, as it was for the last time.

"Will you not speak to me, dearest?" he said, kissing away the tears that were falling fast on the hand he still held.

“Speak to me, Cordelia, and tell me how it will be, when next that moon shall rise upon us both ; but, ah ! what worlds of time and space shall I have to live through before then.”

In turning to look at the soft light that was now filling the heavens, a ringlet of Lady Cordelia’s hair got entangled in a slight gold chain that hung around her lover’s neck.

“See,” said he, liberating the imprisoned curl, “see how even chance conspires to link us together ; is not this a good omen, dear one ?”

“How superstitious you are,” said Lady Cordelia, smiling through all her tears.

“And what if I am, Cordelia ; love is a species of idolatry, (at least mine for you,) and, therefore, not even you can divest me of my superstition ; but as I cannot bear to possess any thing in which you have no part, I must try and infect you with it,” he continued, throw-

ing the chain playfully round her neck ;
“ this chain came from the East, and there is a deep, deep spell upon every link. Doubt me but for a moment,” said he, smiling, “ and the ore will look no longer bright ; pass one whole hour without thinking of me, and it will become insupportably heavy under the weight of my affliction ; forsake me, and every link will break, as will my heart.”

“ Really,” said Lady Cordelia, almost laughing, “ you have taken care of yourself ; but, pray, by what signs and wonders am *I* to be made acquainted with *your* delinquency, if such a *miracle* should ever take place ?”

“ You are right in calling it a miracle, Cordelia, for it would be one ; yet you need no *separate* tokens of me, for are we not one in life, heart, and soul ?”

“ Very well,” said she, looking archly at him, and calculating on her fingers, “ *how* I shall know that when the ore looks

dim *you* are doubting *me*; when its weight oppresses me, that *you* are not thinking of *me*, and when the links sever! that then is the time for *my* heart to break. Ah! what a fatal gift."

"I promise you," said the earl, smiling, "that had I ever suspected logic (and such logic) could issue out of those rosy portals, that should be sacred to love alone, *I* should as soon have thought of falling in love with my old tutor as with you; but the crime is now committed, and I am so hardened, that there is no chance of my repenting; but all this is folly; and this is no time for trifling. Ah, Cordelia," he continued, looking mournfully at her, "*if* I should find you gone for ever, when I return — that is, if I should find you another's!"

"And what other's *could* I be?" she replied, timidly, raising her beautiful eyes to his, with an expression of truth and tenderness that out-weighed whole worlds of vows; "for what other is there

like you, Ossory? what other have I — loved, (she would have said, but changed it to) known from childhood?”

“ Yes, yes,” said he, pressing her burning hand to his heart, that beat with the wild tumult of a thousand conflicting feelings, “ we *have* known, we *have* loved from childhood ; others have done the same, and yet, Cordelia, they have lived to live apart — lived to love — no more !”

“ Dear Ossory,* you *are* superstitious, since you speak of impossibilities as possibilities. You see that moon ; you see the shadows it reflects, even ours ; if it changes, so must they ; *you* are the source from which *my* all of light and life is derived ; yet, if *you* change —

* The earl *had* a Christian name ; but that name was Thomas !!! The reader will therefore excuse further mention of it ; as every one, at all enlightened as to metaphysics (even gentlemen who themselves labour under the name), must feel convinced, that apostrophising a lover by such a name would annihilate love itself.

though, yes, I too must change, for then *I* should, indeed, darken into nothing."

"My own love, my own dear Cordelia, is human change the effect of human will? if it were, I should not be leading you now — no, no; we are the mere tools (too often of our own blind impulse) but always the passive instruments of a superior agency, which none may avert, and still less control; but when I spoke of losing you, I meant not, for I thought not, that it would be with your own free will; but there are those who can give people wills that are *not* their own, yet make them think they *are* — the evil one deceives and infatuates, before he destroys; before he *could* destroy; and who is there shall say, I will not be deceived — I will not be infatuated — I will believe nothing but what bears the impress of truth? for who is there, that may say, where most is falsehood, *what is truth?*"

Lady Cordelia was about to reply,

when the door opened, and her father and mother, preceded by a page with lights, entered. The conversation (if a few broken sentences could be called conversation) of course became general. Lord Dorset's manner to the young earl was that of genuine kindness and regret. The countess's, that of maternal affection, how genuine we will not pretend to determine. Supper was announced; the meal passed in utter silence; and when Lord Ossory rose to depart, the earl was unaffectedly affected, and stammered out a "God bless you, my boy;" her ladyship presented her fair hand to him, and said, with a faint voice, "you will write to us, Ossory?" and wept as she said it; she best knew why. Lady Cordelia could breathe no adieu in exchange for her lover's "farewell, dearest;" but when the door closed on him, she hurried to her own room, and, for the first time in her life, *felt* what wretchedness was; in vain she recalled every look

and tone of him, whom she had loved almost since she had begun to live ; it might not avail ; for when could imagination ever yet fill the aching void reality had left ? there was no rest for her ; she could but wake and weep. Throughout the gloom of that eternal night, her lover's "farewell" rang in her ear like the knell of every hope ; misery, in her long, long catalogue, has no torture like it. — The mere word *is* the tomb of happiness.

* * * *

Weeks and months past ; for time does not stand still, even with the unhappy. At first, every courier brought regular letters from the young earl, and every letter was but the transcript of a heart devoted to his "dear, dear Cordelia ;" but soon they became less frequent ; and at length ceased altogether ! "Could it be that he *was* changed, and loved her no longer ? Oh, no, no ; she was sure

that was not the case, the letters might have been lost — or, (ah, bitter thought!) he might have been, might still be ill; yet even *that*, any thing was more bearable than her first surmise. Still days came and went, and brought no tidings from or of him; and the countess grew clamorous in her regrets as to the fact, and her conjectures as to the cause of his silence, and even *expressed* much more confidence in his unalterable constancy and regard, than her daughter had, for some time, dared to *feel*; but things could not remain at this point for ever; and the kind mother soon changed her position to more advantageous ground, by dropping vague and delicate hints on the perfidy of *all men*, and then, as if by accident, but on purpose, allowing flashes of indignation to escape her, at the idea of her daughter being subjected to the perfidy of any man; till at length came the broad unambiguous assertion, that “Lady Cordelia Germaine should have more

pride than to let her bloom wither for the falsehood of such a worthless strippling." All these remarks, and still more the circumstances that called them forth, had their weight with Lady Cordelia. — She tried daily, hourly, to forget Lord Ossory ; but memory will not be banished at a mandate ; she even called her pride to her assistance, which painted his conduct in the most glaring colours ; but then came love, and softened them all ; and pride's most powerful argument is weak to love's least. To these eternal struggles with herself, loss of health succeeded ; in trying to vanquish, she was vanquished, as many others have been.

" Yes, it *is* wrong of me, after such conduct, to think of him more," said Lady Cordelia aloud, in answer to her own thoughts, one day as she was sitting at work with her mother, in the very room where the subject of those thoughts had, for the last time, breathed vows of eternal love to her.

“What — then you *have* heard,” said the countess, raising her eyes from her embroidery, and fixing them on her daughter, her cheek kindling as she spoke, “you have heard of his” — and then suddenly checking herself, as if with a great effort to control some powerful emotion, she again bent her eyes upon her work, and remained perfectly silent.

“I have heard nothing,” said Lady Cordelia; “I even asked the Duke of Ormond the other day, if *he* had heard from his son, and he had not — but *you have* heard something, dearest mother, I conjure you tell me what it is; I can bear any thing and every thing now,” — and she sank back in her chair, not able to bear her own feelings.

“No, no; I have heard nothing,” (this at least was true,) said the countess, turning away her face to avert her child’s earnest gaze, which even *she* could not brook — “at least nothing —”

“It will not grieve me, indeed it will

not," interrupted Lady Cordelia passionately; "only tell me the worst, tell me that he cares no longer for me — that he loves an — another — and from this day you shall see me an altered being."

"Another!" said the countess with a lip of scorn and eye of fire, that were not altogether assumed, for she scorned herself while she spoke — "if it were *only another*" —

Lady Cordelia heard no more, but from that day she *was* an *altered being*; that is, she had that over-powering and fatiguing gaiety which assumed spirits always create, and which is so over-acted, and so much "o'ersteps the modesty of Nature," as scarcely to deceive the most ordinary and shallow observer; *hers* did *not* deceive any one except herself, for she fancied that she had succeeded in forgetting the past, whilst in reality the very efforts she made to do so, brought it more vividly to her imagination. "I do not wear his chain, (she would repeat

to herself); I do not read his letters, or even look at his flowers, which, like his love, are faded now;" but in the midst of all these eulogiums on her own forbearance and resolution, she never once had the courage to destroy his gifts; yet if she had, she could not have destroyed her remembrance of him who gave them, nor of one of those gone-by times, whose tales they all too dearly told.

* * * *

None dressed so well, none looked so beautiful, none were so flattered, followed, and even loved as Lady Cordelia; with her, to be seen was to be admired. No wonder then, that splendid offers poured in on all sides; if she did not accept them, her parents did not urge her; amid this vortex of flattery, folly, and adulation, had she not possessed a *heart*, her head might have been turned; but the heart often saves the head —

would that as often the head could save the heart.

At this period, Mr. Trevillion became a constant guest at Lord Dorset's; he was a gentleman, neither old nor young; neither good nor bad; handsome nor ugly; learned or illiterate; clever nor stupid; in short, he abounded in all the negative virtues that constitute "*a good sort of man*," and possessed *one positive* virtue—an unencumbered estate of forty-two thousand a year. As his visits became more frequent, and his attentions to Lady Cordelia more marked, the countess took numberless occasions to lament to her daughter (with gentle sighs, and a not disfiguring number of tears,) the earl's past extravagance, which had put it totally out of his power to give his daughter a suitable dower; which, however, had no other effect on Lady Cordelia than to draw from her a philosophical reflection, that, as she was without fortune, she should

be the better able to judge, whether she was really loved for herself or not; to this her lady mother assented, with even more than her usual suavity; but still *this* was not what *she* wanted; however, she was too great an adept in human nature, and too old a proficient in moulding others to her will, to be disheartened by such a failure. She changed her mode of attack, and a certain reduction in the splendour of the establishment at Dorset House was soon perceptible; then she was for ever planning before her daughter, improvements and alterations; *thinking* of new furniture, and new jewels, and ending everything with a "No, I cannot though—the earl can't afford it, and we must really try, my dear child, and not leave you quite portionless, for Heaven only knows if your brother George may be always as fond of you as he is now."

In short, Lady Dorset wished her daughter should marry Mr. Trevillion!

that she *should* wish it may be a matter of surprise, when she might have had her choice from among the “magnates of the land ;” — true, but then few, if any, of the “magnates of the land” had, like Mr. Trevillion, an unencumbered estate of forty-two thousand a year; and the proud countess knew that rank, unaccompanied with wealth, was but a mortgage on the pride of its possessor, and a pensioner on the homage of others. Besides, there were few men whom she could have such complete control over, as the easy, tractable Horace Trevillion, Esq. of Borrowdale, in the county of York; and with *his* money and *her* management, she might hereafter, if she pleased, get him made a duke; therefore, she determined that he should marry her daughter; and what had Lady Dorset ever determined *should be*, that had *not* been? * * *

* * * * *

Mr. Trevillion, at length, summoned

sufficient courage to make the beautiful, the brilliant, the worshipped, the high-born Lady Cordelia Germaine an offer of his hand, and the beautiful, brilliant, high-born Lady Cordelia Germaine summoned sufficient courage to accept it. In doing so, she argued, that she should play the heroine, in sacrificing her own inclination to that of her parents or rather parent, for her father was perfectly passive, further than warmly wishing her happiness in all things; moreover she decided, that by this marriage she should pique her faithless lover by showing him that he had not broken her heart, which appeared to have been his aim; and, finally, she did much to assure herself that *she really had* ceased to care about *him*; but the very pains she took to prove this, proved that she *had not*. How many like her have tried to deceive themselves? and, like her, found too late the folly of such an attempt? To argue against nature is indeed

“Vain philosophy, and false reasoning all.”

* * * * *

The day preceding that of her nuptials, as Lady Cordelia was walking on a terrace before the house with her destined husband, she stopped suddenly, and with a hurried voice and crimson cheek said, “Mr. Trevillion, I suppose you are aware that I once loved Lord Ossory? at least I think it right to tell you so.”

Mr. Trevillion *was* aware of it, and bowed his acknowledgment of the fact; and after an awkward silence of a few minutes, said, taking the hand of his bride elect in his, “But you do not love him now?”

“I should think, Sir,” said the proud beauty, withdrawing her hand somewhat haughtily, and she *thought* she spoke the truth, “I should think, Sir, that my marrying *you* was a sufficient proof that I *do not*.”

Mr. Trevillion thought so too, at least he fancied that he *ought to think* so, and thinking one *ought to think* a thing is, in nine cases out of ten, the same thing as thinking it.

* * * *

Lady Cordelia gave *one* look to Lord Ossory's fond letters, faded flowers, and fatal chain; one sigh to what *had* been, a thousand to what might be, and *married*—Mr. Trevillion!

But, alas! what are the projects that the wisest form, and the most successful achieve? Six months after her daughter's marriage, Lady Dorset breathed her last, and the year following her demise, Mr. Trevillion died of a brain fever, leaving his beautiful wife the uncontrolled management of his whole fortune.

* * * *

Young, beautiful, rich, free, followed,

flattered, and admired, it was not likely that Lady Cordelia should be without a sufficient number of detractors. The men whom she rejected, pronounced her a coquet; the women she eclipsed decided that she was greatly made up, and that any one who dressed as handsomely would look as well; that she performed many benevolent and charitable actions, none could deny; but then there was a great deal of ostentation in this sort of conduct, and popularity was her *forte*, therefore what merit had she? Others thought it a great piece of incongruity, now that poor Mr. Trevillion (whom they *knew* she never loved) had been dead two years, and that she was the gayest of the gay, her still continuing to wear black; unless, indeed, she fancied it became her, which was most likely her real reason, as she certainly had what is generally called a very fine skin, though they could not say they admired that excessive fairness.

And why was Lady Cordelia the gayest of the gay? or rather why did she try to appear so? and study to dazzle and to vanquish in every circle that she moved in? and though she succeeded beyond the most sanguine expectations that vanity could have formed, why was she in reality *wretched*? I know not, except that she *loved*; and what *is* love but the complex antithesis of the human heart? the focus of opposing feelings? It causes us to hope we know not what, yet at the same time to anticipate evil; to feel that fear is but the prediction of truth, yet to disregard its warnings; it gives us the daring of heroism, and yet infects us with the reluctance of cowardice; it banishes all littleness from the mind, yet humbles it to itself; for those who would sacrifice *nothing* to ambition, interest, or fame, too often sacrifice *every* thing to love; with them love is frequently a passion, comprising as much *vanity* as affection; perhaps, because it is *but* the

passion of a man's life ; it is the principle of a woman's, and therefore with them totally free from all those sudden ebbs and flows which impulse creates. The estimation in which men hold women is often nothing more than a reaction of the opinions and admiration of others ; few men would venture to choose a wife (any more than to wear a coat) that was not the fashion ; for which reason they seldom think of women but as they are *thought of*.

It might be from knowing this, that Lady Cordelia, while she only coveted the *love of one*, courted the admiration of *all* ; it would, she thought, give her a value in his eyes which she might intrinsically want. How many have and do act like her ; and how little cause men would have to be vain, if they could guess how often women dress to look beautiful ; converse to be agreeable, witty, brilliant, and fascinating, and do their worst in witchery, whether in mu-

sic or in motion ; not, indeed, with a view to please those who are then pouring flattery into their ear, further than with a hope that those praises may reach some far distant one ; — and this reversionary sort of value, is all that a woman, while she loves one man, can attach to the admiration of every man or any man ; therefore, ye lords of the creation, exult not too much in *your flattery* and *women's folly*.

Whether Lady Cordelia acted on this principle or not, it is certain that she sought admiration, and gained the admiration she sought. It is equally certain that Lord Ossory's chain was now never a moment from her neck. Once more time had for her but one epoch, that had been the *present*, it was now the *past*. Again, memory and imagination became *one thought*, and life was but *one feeling*. The void love had left in her heart, was still darkened by his shadow, and peopled with those my-

riads of vague hopes, which constitute the fulness of vacancy. A door could not open but she raised her eyes to it, hoping — what? — *Nothing*. And yet she turned gloomily away when reality did not present to her the form which was never absent from her memory, though reason told her that at that moment seas rolled between them. No letter could be brought her, though she *knew* it was not from *him*, but every feeling sickened into disappointment, when she *saw* that it was not; for love can disappoint us even in what we have *not hoped*.

She had of late grown *very, very* intimate with Miss Hamilton; and as the beautiful Elizabeth lived at her uncle's, the Duke of Ormond's, she of course was in the way of knowing as much as could be known about her cousin Os-sory; but that much was not a great deal. She told Lady Cordelia one morning, "that she had just got a letter

from him ; that he was then at Paris ; spoke much of the brilliancy of the French court ; but was neither very well or very happy." To hear that he was not well was torture — to hear that he was unhappy not *quite* so much so. But as Miss Hamilton had never known of Lady Cordelia's engagement to her cousin, and consequently never heard of his inconstancy, nothing more was said on the subject.

It will not now be wondered at, that Lady Cordelia should be in despair at the loss of her chain ; or that from that vague sort of hope which constantly attended her, more than from any belief in the science, that she at length yielded to her maid's importunities to apply to an infallible Italian astrologer, then residing in Tower-street, as the only chance of regaining it ; "and, indeed, my Lady," said the pretty Alice, in concluding her oration, " he *has* told and foretold

such things as would perfectly astonish you."

"Well then," said Lady Cordelia, "I *will* write, and ask Lady Berry if she'll go with me to-morrow."

CHAP. XVII.

LADY Berry (having replied to Lady Cordelia's billet in the affirmative,) came at an early hour the next morning to accompany her to the astrologer's, Sir Ambrose having left home still earlier, and said that he should not return till late in the day. Lady Cordelia was not yet ready; and her page left the room, saying he would inform her ladyship that Lady Berry was come.

The apartment she was in was more than splendid; it abounded in all that could charm, of literature, music, painting, art, nature, and taste. "Yet, I know not how it is," thought Rebecca, "with all this, these rooms have always an air of melancholy, almost amounting to desolation, about them. I wonder if Lady Cordelia is happy?"

As she formed this conjecture, her eye rested on a collection of loose papers that lay on a table before her, half hid among some flowers that the page had been about to place in a vase when she entered. The writing was Lady Cordelia's ; and, as she perceived they were only verses, she could not resist the curiosity that prompted her to read the following lines :—

'Tis well, thou world, that thou should'st think
Me proud, and cold, and vain ;
I would not have *thee* view each link
That forms my heart's true chain.

I would not *thou* should'st know the tears
That dim my smiling eyes,
Or see hopes blighted into fears,
Or hear my burning sighs.

Too well I've loved — too much believed,
Still found the future pain ;
And those who've been so long deceived,
May scarcely trust again.

To flowers that wither in the blast,
And feelings in their spring,
The cold, dark shadows of the past
Is all that time can bring.

But *I*, who bear my weight of life,
Unguided, and alone,
Must learn to quell the idle strife
'Tween fate and feeling sown ;

Must mask with smiles an aching heart ;
And 'mid the bright array,
Where each one acts another's part,
Look gayest of the gay.

Oh ! would that I indeed could *be*
The careless thing I seem ;
Or still believe, fair Hope, in thee,
And dream again joy's dream.

But tho' Hope's radiant sun is set,
That lent youth's morn such light,
Its fairy rays are ling'ring yet
Thro' sorrow's darken'd night.

They linger yet — but not to throw
False halos round my love,
Of earthly things whose bliss is woe,
But guide my thoughts above.

Think, then, thou world, e'en as thou wilt,
What boots thy love to me ?
Let those who know less grief than guilt
Seek fame and praise from thee.

Thy purchas'd praise, thy heartless smiles,
But harrow and betray,
Like that false light, whose elfin wiles
Lead wanderers' steps astray.

“No, Lady Cordelia is *not* happy,” said Rebecca, as she replaced the lines ; and yet, at that moment, one of the most joyous laughs she had ever heard met her ear. On turning to ascertain from whom it proceeded, she beheld Lady Cordelia ! looking at her through a half-open door ; not, indeed, as she had been wont to behold her, but equipped from head to foot as a country-woman — her beautiful golden hair confined, and almost hid behind a close, linen cap ; a black wimple or hood shading the contour of her face. On her neck she wore a geranium-coloured kerchief, plaited down the back, and relieved by a tucker of snow-white cambric. The vivid red of her handkerchief formed a pretty and picturesque contrast to the bright purple of her short and thickly-plaited woollen petticoat ; her stockings were of the same deep blue, (happily the only species of blue-stock-ingism known in those days,) with red

clocks edged with white ; while her little feet did penance in a pair of nailed shoes, two inches thick, and had, moreover, to endure the weight of a pair of enormous silver buckles.

“ How kind it is of you to come,” she said, addressing Lady Berry, and half advancing into the room. “ But do not laugh at me till you are dressed, and then we can both laugh together ; but Alice and her mother must tutor you as they have been tutoring me ; for they say that we do not speak properly for our dress, and that the astrologer will discover that we are deceiving him, and will not tell us a single word of truth.”

“ Oh, but as I do not want him to tell *me any thing*,” said Rebecca, smiling, “ why need I dress up at all ?”

“ Yes, yes, but you must,” replied Lady Cordelia, taking her hand, and drawing her into her dressing-room, “ for it will never do for me to go alone this figure ; and *you* are to be my mother.

Look, what a fine old lumbering dress Alice has got for *you*."

"Very fine, indeed," said Lady Berry, laughing, as she took a survey of the ponderous chintz petticoats, and brown velvet hood, in which she was to figure. "But still, if we *should* meet any one we know, our dress cannot alter our faces, and how very foolish we should look."

"As for that," rejoined Lady Cordelia, laughing, as she reached a huge pair of double green spectacles from the toilet, "you, *my good woman*, are to wear these suitable appendages to your years; and I, of course, as befits a modest young damsel, shall keep my wimple close round my face; so that I do not think there is much chance even of Signor Manfredati's detecting us with all his infallibility, do you, Alice?"

"Ah, my Lady," said Alice solemnly, with a shake of her pretty head, to which Lord Burleigh's was nothing, "I would not be too sure of *that*; for they

do say that the Queen herself went, and Miss Jennings, and Miss Price, and two or three more ladies, dressed up as orange-girls; and he found 'em *all* out, my Lady, and even told her Majesty as much as that the King did not care for her; and showed her (in that way he has of showing people,) Miss Stewart as plain as I see you now, my Lady, and Nell Gwynn, and that brat of her's that they call Duke of St. Alban's, and said they were the cause of it; and Lady Castlemaine—"

"Hush, hush, Alice, how can you believe such silly tales?" said Lady Cordelia.

"*Well*, my Lady," said Alice, with an air of confident resignation, "you'll *see* whether it is true or not."

"Do you know Lady Castlemaine?" asked Rebecca.

"I did know her," replied Lady Cordelia, "but, like many others, she has behaved very ungratefully to me; but,

for that matter, there is nothing but ingratitude in the world, and 'I am sick of being kind to any one.'"

The fact was, that Lady Cordelia had, like many others, set out in life with feelings of what she thought excessive philanthropy and benevolence towards her fellow-creatures ; that is, with falsely giving human nature credit for a great deal more good than it possesses. With all who do this, misanthropy and disgust must naturally succeed to the more amiable and humane impulses, as disappointment destroys the chimera that visionary benevolence had conjured up ; but genuine philanthropy is a species of moral asbestos, which passes, unscathed, through the fiery ordeals of treachery and ingratitude, nor varies with the vices of others. If we never did right but for the sake of *right* itself, we could never be disappointed in the result ; if we never performed a kind and benevolent action, but from a sense of what is due to God

and ourselves (the *only* motive that *ought* to actuate us,) we could never be galled by ingratitude, or stung by injustice. And, above all, if we would only look at the faults, follies, and vices of others, as beacons to shun them in ourselves, we should be more apt to view them with a compassionate sort of obligation, than with severity and censure ; but whilst we continue to do good on the principle of obtaining the gratitude and affection of our fellow-creatures, we only place out our virtues at an usurious interest, and deserve to fail in our speculations ; for in expecting *too much* from *others*, we require *too little* from ourselves.

But to return to the two metamorphosed beauties, whose toilets were nearly completed.

“ Dear me, my Lady,” said Alice, walking round Rebecca, “ you look much too young, and seventy times too handsome for an old woman ; and, as to *your ancles*, my Lady, (turning to her

her mistress) why, spite of the blue stockings, such a pair never belonged to a country-girl."

"Oh! these horrid shoes," said Lady Cordelia, laughing as she stumped about in them, "I think it would be a good way to boil the nails, as the pilgrim did the peas; for they hurt so, that I am sure I shall never be able to perform a pilgrimage either to our Lady of Loretto, or our gentleman of Tower-street."

"And pray what may that enormous chain and scissors be for?" enquired Lady Berry, as Alice reached one from the table.

"Oh that, my Lady, with this pin-cushion, and these knitting needles, and worsted stockings are to hang by your side; and this basket of peaches and flowers, Lady Cordelia is to take on her arm."

"Well, but now that we *are* dressed," said Lady Cordelia, "we ought to lose no time in setting out, so do Alice send

for a hackney coach, for I am sure we are such strange figures, that we should have a crowd after us, if we walked any part of the way."

When the coach arrived, the two ladies, accompanied by Alice, got into it, and after the man had been duly directed where to drive to, and assured them, with a knowing wink, that he knew very well where the place was, they found themselves rumbling along, actually on their way to the far-famed Signor Manfredati's, and so laughable was their appearance, as they looked at one another, and so flagrant seemed the absurdity of their expedition, that they felt greatly inclined to turn back, and most probably would, but for the wonders the loquacious damsel Alice kept relating of the astrologer, — wonders which she had not half finished recounting, when they found themselves in Tower-street; a prior phalanx of hackney coaches prevented theirs from immediately drawing up to the door

of a very shabby, dirty looking house, several stories high ; and when they succeeded in doing so, the door was opened by an old woman, whose personal attractions were of the Hecate style. She told them in a sharp querulous tone, that the Signor was busy, and could not see them for an hour or two, but bade them follow her, which they did, up several flights of dirty narrow creaking stairs ; at length they arrived at a landing-place, which it appeared was to be their journey's end, for the old woman flung open a door, which was half off its hinges, and led the way into a low, dark room, with a sanded floor, two high backed chairs, with torn black leather seats, from which a large quantity of horse hair appeared for a long time to have been struggling for emancipation ; the light of day was only partially admitted through a narrow lattice window, between whose leaden squares were pieces of transparent horn, instead of glass,

and the drapery that hung from it, was of tattered red and white check ; on the hearth, before the expiring embers of a smoky green-wood fire sat, with elevated backs, and curled tails, two gigantic black cats, looking like “ kings of dark images ;” over the high and thickly scratched chimney-piece were two broken jugs filled with clay, from which towered the manes of a geranium and myrtle shrub ; from one side of the wall hung a torn and deeply smoked map of the county of Middlesex ; on the other, a helmet, cuirasse, and arquebuss, with its scriptural motto of “ O Lord, open thou our lips, and our mouths shall shew forth thy praise,” which had so recently constituted the armour of the round-head soldiery. As the two ladies and Alice were about to enter into this very uninviting apartment, the old woman, pointing to a well muddied sheep-skin mat, that lay at the threshold, rudely pushed Lady Cordelia aside, with a

“How now, wench, you need not carry the dirt of every street in London into my rooms; plague enough have I to keep them as they are, with all the silly jades like you that come here lover-hunting; but light pockets and heavy hearts is all that comes of such pranks.”

“You old sorceress, do you know?” began the indignant Alice, but just then recollecting that she did not want her to *know* whom she was speaking to, she, for the first time in her life, held her tongue when she wished to speak; and, following her lady’s example, made the ancient dame a low courtesy, and passed on into the room, where we shall for the present leave them, (Lady Cordelia and Rebecca in possession of the two high-backed chairs, and Alice, much to her discomfort, of the window seat, till the Signor Manfredati has vouchsafed to give them an audience) and follow Sir Ambrose in his morning’s walk.

CHAP. XVIII.

SIR Ambrose had of late, according to *his* version of the stars, read in his own especial share of them much of dark import, which left him ill at rest, as to his claims on futurity ; but being anxious to obtain a more favourable translation of their obscure meanings, than his own knowledge had enabled him to acquire, and having written to that arch knave, Lord Rochester, (or as we must now call him Pietro di Manfredati,) and received the answer (which he had written to him from the Duke of Buckingham's) appointing this day for a meeting, he left home at an early hour, filled with impatience as to the interview, and anxiety as to the result.

After a due perambulation of divers dirty lanes and crowded streets, the ba-

ronet arrived in Tower-street, not indeed at the same door to which his wife and Lady Cordelia came a few hours afterwards; for the wily Earl having foreseen that these sort of matrimonial rencontres would not (for obvious reasons,) be the most agreeable to the parties themselves, or the most advantageous to him, had, by separate entrances, guarded against all such contingencies.

As this meeting was preconcerted, Sir Ambrose had not to wait long before he was ushered into the presence of the formidable predictor of future events. After traversing several long narrow passages, and two or three rooms, much in the same style as that into which the old woman had conducted Lady Berry and Lady Cordelia, he reached one less shabby than the rest, where the forbidding old man, who had acted as groom of the chambers to him, and who looked as if he had been the better or worse half of the old woman, (if the positive fact of

best or worst could have been ascertained on a division by the lady in question,) resigned him to the care of Eden Green, who played lord in waiting, in his most perfectionized state of deformity; and on the entrance of the knight rose *ex officio*; and after ringing a bell, that sounded to the ears of Sir Ambrose like the “knell that was to summon him to heaven or to hell,” he threw open a door, and with a long black rod that he held in his hand, pushed the baronet into a long narrow passage, and shut the door on him. In this place shone just light enough to make “darkness visible;” and from the pillars on each side of him, round which were coiled twisted snakes, there issued a low hissing noise, like that of serpents; and ever and anon, a bat flitted across his path, flapping its ill-omened wizard wing against his cheek.

Used as he was to crucibles, alembics, and all the dark furniture of the forges, with the self-created horrors of his la-

boratory, he felt his blood curdle amid the death-like life of this place and its charnel atmosphere. Above him sparkled the mimic lustre of a thousand planets; and though he knew their light to be but artificial, yet to his distempered and anxious imagination, every star shone like a mirror, in which was typed futurity.

At length he reached the end of this long portentous passage, and found himself, without being intercepted by any further barrier, in a spacious apartment, the very air of which was the breath of luxury; how different from that he had been in a moment before! At the upper end of the room sat Lord Rochester on the throne, and in the dress he had described to the Duke of Bucks; one owl was perched familiarly on his shoulder, and the fates rolled their eyes darkly above him. At intervals, the solemn peal of an organ stole on the ear, with a

muffled sound, that gave the notes an almost supernatural tone.

Before the astrologer burnt, in a large silver censer, a quantity of incense, that sent up volumes of blue and highly perfumed smoke, which nearly obscured every object within its reach. A large volume of thickly interlineated hieroglyphics appeared completely to engross the attention of the seer. Around him were scattered sybiline leaves, on which figured the horoscopes of many. Celestial globes, compasses, and telescopes completed the rest of his apparatus. Nor did he raise his learned eyes till the knight stood full before him, and he then fixed them on him, without his features undergoing the slightest variation of expression. After having perused his countenance for a few minutes, he motioned to him to be seated; and then in a hollow sepulchral tone, demanded of him in Latin the day and hour of his nativity? Sir Ambrose replying in

the same language, informed him, that he had taken his stand in creation on the 6th of December, in the year 1600, between the hours of twelve at night and one in the morning.

The astrologer turned over the leaves of the book before him, and having muttered several times that six was a number to which the fates had never shown any favour, took his compasses, and after making innumerable calculations, with a pen cut out of an eagle's quill, closed the book, and knitting his dark brows, said, or rather shouted, with the yell of a fiend —

*“ Sextus Tarquinius, Sextus Nero, Sextus et ipse,
Semper sub Sexto perdita Roma fuit.”*

And *your sextus* bodes you no better ! The yell was repeated by a triple reverberation, that lost none of its horrors as it died away in the distance ; and the prediction found a deep echo in the superstitious soul of Sir Ambrose.

“ Enough,” said he, with a groan ;
 “ but there is another whose fate is
 linked in mine ;” and as he spoke a
 ghastly smile overspread his pale dis-
 tortured features.

The astrologer put his hand into a
 golden urn, and took from it a dried
 lotus leaf, on which were engraven in
 black crooked characters, the following
 lines, which were not much calculated
 to remove the disagreeable impression
 his former forebodings had left : —

*“ You would speak, you would speak of your fair
 young bride,
 But her place shall be soon by another’s side ;
 And roses shall bloom amid the snow,
 Ere grief for you that bride can know.*

*“ You would ask, you would ask more than know-
 ledge may tell,
 Yet full soon shall you learn that secret too well.
 Then seek no more, nor tarry hither,
 The flowers you’ve cull’d e’en now must wither.”*

Sir Ambrose ground his teeth, and
 crumbling the ill-omened leaf in his

clenched hand, the fragments of it fell to the ground, on which he stamped furiously, and then turning to the astrologer said, in a slow measured ironical tone, as he folded his arms, and fixed his keen saturnine eyes upon him,

“And has fate *no* other *blessings* in store for me? though I must own she has been so *very* lavish, that I scarcely dare hope for more.”

“If thou art not yet satisfied,” replied the astrologer, “and must need have the seal of certainty set on all that I have told thee, even ask of a power beyond mine; and thy curiosity shall be gratified at all hazards;” so saying, he pointed to an aperture in the wall, resembling the mouth of a cave, and told the knight “he might consult the oracle.” Sir Ambrose paused for a moment, as if to ascertain the extent of the astrologer’s veracity, or his own superstition and credulity, and then, with the sudden movement of one who had no-

thing more to lose, rushed, rather than walked, into the cave, where all was total darkness; a few faint exquisite notes met his ear, like that of fairy music; the air was an Italian one of great popularity at that time, and one which Rebecca had often sung to him; it needed not this remembrance to overpower him; the place, the air, the more than mortal strain in which it was played were sufficient; and it had ceased for some minutes before Sir Ambrose had recovered himself sufficiently to recollect for what purpose he was there; and he then exclaimed, with a voice of thunder, as if he thought to bully the fates into dealing more mercifully with him than they had hitherto done,

“Oracle, if thou art an oracle, tell me what more I may expect; tell me *all*.”

A sweet soft voice arose like that of a woman's at a distance; and he heard (pronounced in accents so faint, that

they appeared more like the echo of music than music itself) the following words :

“ Once — twice — thrice — I warn’d thee of the snare ;

Once — twice — thrice — I call’d aloud — ‘ Be-ware !’

But thou tried the stream with boat and oar,
And darted briefly from the shore.

I call’d again — the last time — thou ferried gaily on ;

Once more thy bark I hail’d, but thou, alas ! wert gone.”*

“ A very oracle truly,” said the knight, with a bitter laugh, when the voice ceased, “ for so obscure are thy words that I cannot see their import.”

A sound arose within the cave like the dash of waters, accompanied by a faint and distant scream, like that of nature’s last effort.

“ Ha ! what accursed necromancy is this ?” exclaimed Sir Ambrose, as he pressed his hands to his forehead, on

* Ancient poetry.

which hung the deadly dews of guilt and remorse. As conscience led him back to that fitful night when the tempest howled, and nature warred against herself, when, reckless alike of the present and the future, and dead to every feeling of humanity, he had plunged the infant Rebecca into the deep bed of the river, and left her to struggle with its world of waters. The scream, the dashing of the water, seemed to him but the re-acting of that night's tragedy, which he had tried long, but tried in vain, to forget; for even when he *looked* on Rebecca as his blooming bride, he too often could only *think* of her as the little victim his barbarity had destined to be the bride of death! He waited for no more, but rushed frantically from the cave, his eyes glaring wildly; his hands clenched, and his heart torn with a thousand contending passions, beating as though it would have burst its confines. On regaining the astrologer's presence, he paused for a few moments, and looked

enquiringly around him, like one awakening from a frightful dream — his features had assumed the pale green cast of death; his livid blue lips quivered, but uttered no sound, as if the words they would have spoken had withered in the sirocco of his fevered and heavy breath; his very cloak hung listlessly, as though it had lost all the energies that silk and velvet can possess, namely, their courtly gloss and modest hues. At length, with returning recollection, he seemed to madden into life; and, forgetting all his former veneration, both for astrology and the astrologer, he advanced furiously towards the Earl, and grasping his shoulder with one hand, whilst he kept the other clenched on his own bosom —

“Tell me,” said he, “thou fiend, thou demon, thou prince of darkness, aught that thou knowest, and *all* that thou knowest of me and the past? But what canst thou know? What can any one know? I did not murder her, (he continued, lowering his voice, and

looking fearfully around;) there is no blood upon these hands; and if these things be wet, (passing his hands over his sleeves) it is rai—rain, and rain comes from Heaven, knowest thou *that?* But no, no, no, *thou* canst know nothing of it; no, nothing! nothing!” and he burst into a hollow, hysterical laugh, and sank into the chair he had occupied on his arrival. The astrologer poured a few drops from a small crystal phial into a cup of cold water, and having got the unhappy knight to swallow it, began chafing his temples. When he came to himself he was calm and composed, and only appeared to retain a vague recollection of the past, the paramount idea of which was his having been guilty of some disrespectful word or deed towards the astrologer, for which he now appeared anxious to atone by every species of respect within his power.

“Father,” he began, “if I have in aught had the ill fortune to offend you —”

“Peace, peace, my son,” interrupted the astrologer in a most benign and protecting voice, “the soul is not responsible for the weakness of our mortal nature; that is, for the infirmities of the body, and thine is ill at ease, so that thine own home would best suit thee at this present.”

Saying which, (and thinking that this scene had lasted quite long enough, an opinion in which the reader will, no doubt, coincide,) he opened a door that led to a landing place different from that by which Sir Ambrose had first entered, and consigning him to the care of the old man who stood there in waiting, returned and closed the door of the room, which the knight began to wish he had never entered. He was in no state to walk home, but having induced his conductor to dispatch a messenger for a hackney coach, he threw himself into it, so oppressed with thought as scarcely to think at all. His first question, on arriving at Whitehall, was —

“Is Lady Berry at home?”

“No, Sir; she has been out all the morning,” was the reply.

“’Tis well,” said he, and instantly repaired to his laboratory, there to commune with his own heart as he best thought fit; — one resolution he was not long in coming to, that of allowing nothing to transpire relative to his morning’s adventure; he also recollected that the next night was that of the masquerade, and he determined to appear there with his beautiful wife. “No,” said he, as he walked at a hurried pace to and fro — “the world shall never know my folly or my madness; if I have knowledge that they may not reach, I have bought it dearly; yet, what is knowledge? we may but know too much to be happy, and too little to be wise. After all, ignorance is the mist that hallows all things; for it is with knowledge as with every thing else, to *know* is to despise the vanity of the idol we ourselves have worshipped; but what have I now to do

with knowledge? but yes, I have its acme yet to learn; the knowledge how to *die*! Well, I will not now turn dunce; all nature has her tempests; what if those of the human heart be the most difficult to quell? the calms which succeed are more deadly and lasting; then shall not *this* prepare me for death's still greater calm? aye, that calm, and the grave's gloom, is Lethe's gloom; but has it Lethe's quiet? My poor Rebecca, and wilt thou — but pshaw! what boots all this? I must be as I have been; and something more. Rebecca, I will meet thee with smiles, doubt them not for being the first, since they will also be the last."

Sir Ambrose kept his word, and on her return greeted his wife with a greater show of happiness than he had ever evinced before.

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DAME REBECCA BERRY.

VOL. III.

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DAME REBECCA BERRY,

OR,

Court Scenes

IN THE REIGN OF

CHARLES THE SECOND.

" Let not that devil,
That cursed curiosity, seduce you
To hunt for needless secrets, which, neglected,
Shall never hurt your quiet ; but, once known,
Shall sit upon your heart, pinch it with pain,
And banish the sweet sleep for ever from you.
Go to : — be yet advised."

JANE SHORE.

" What then ? Things do their best, — and they and we
Must answer for the intent, and not the event."

OLD PLAY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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DAME REBECCA BERRY.

CHAPTER I.

BEFORE we return to the two ladies and the impatient Alice, it may be as well to retire behind the scenes for a few moments, and witness a little of that mirth which Lord Rochester and his able coadjutor the Duke of Bucks were indulging in at the expence of the ill-fated Sir Ambrose; perhaps it is needless to say that Eden Green performed the part of the sybil; nor did it in any way interfere with his avocations as lord in waiting, he being that ubiquitous sort of personage, whose talents or person were never confined to any particular sphere.

“Ha! ha! ha! ha!” laughed the hair-brained earl, when the door had fairly closed on the knight.

“Ha! ha! ha!” echoed the still more delighted duke, as he emerged from the cave, where he had been an invisible spectator of the whole scene.

“That thou didst out-devil the devil, John, (said he, when he could speak,) I never doubted, but *this* is out-Rochestering Rochester, and verily, thou never need'st fear to be eclipsed in so arduous an achievement; ha! ha! ha! I could laugh till I died at the very remembrance of the good use thou madest of the sketch I had given thee of the knight's life and adventures; and the horror that seized him when Master Eden so relentlessly plunged thy bull-dog Firebrand into the great tub of water, (as *he* had once done his sposa into the river, so legends tell,) was worth a kingdom, or what is still better, a whole year's fun, at the Duke and Devil, in Crutched

Friars, though it did splash and spoil my best cloak and doublet, I not being prepared for any prank of the sort, more than the worthy Templeton, ha! ha! ha!"

"And the faint scream! was it not to the life?" said the earl.

"No, it was to the death," quoth the duke, "which was much more to the purpose."

"Ha! ha! ha! or to the death, as thou sayest, George," laughed the earl, as he filled two large golden cups from a flask of Rhenish; "but the scream was entirely the urchin's own invention. So here's to the *vivida vis animi* of Master Eden Green," said he, quaffing off the wine.

"*Viva! viva!*" shouted the duke, "I would willingly buy him from thee at a thousand, and pay thee in devils."

"Marry, and I never doubted thy sagacity, gentle Bucks; but where art thou, imp of my soul? Come forth, thou better part of myself?" and accordingly

Master Eden issued from the cave, leisurely adjusting the trappings of his deformity, with every muscle of his face unmoved; and followed by Lord Ossory, who had accompanied the duke in his morning's expedition, and who, in spite of the melancholy that seemed to pervade all he said and did, could not help being diverted at the scene he had witnessed, though he reprobated the lengths to which the jest had been carried.

"Ho! Firebrand, my poor fellow," said Lord Rochester, caressing his dog, who, savage, wet, and hungry, was the next arrival from the cave. — "There is the wages of *thy* morning's services," he continued, throwing him a roast chicken, which the bull-dog devoured at a mouthful.

"And am I to be the only one," asked the duke, "who by virtue of my office has nothing to do?"

"Patience, gentle Bucks," replied the earl, "and thou shalt not long have to

complain of lack of trouble ; *thy* peculiar care shall be the best part of the creation ; that is the best, because they are the worst ; and, no doubt, Milton was thinking of women, when he makes Satan exclaim,

“ Evil, be thou my good.”

It shall be thine for to-day ; for that jealous goose, Chesterfield, is to be with me ; no doubt to ask what line of conduct my wisdom would advise him to pursue respecting his green-footed *philanthropic* lady ; and as I owe her a grudge, certes I shall strongly recommend country air, if it were only for the good of her health. So while I am engaged with him, thou must e'en attend to the fair nymphs who grace the other side of this building, and mind thou art perfect in thy lesson, not making any mistakes about the transparencies, which, when well managed, can shame even Lely's facsimiles ; and Ossory there, who looks like a spectre, can

go with thee, and will prove an able assistant, should it be necessary to conjure up a bona fide ghost; but go thou, (he continued, turning to Eden Green,) and bring us news of the arrivals."

The page darted off, and his master then conducted the duke and Lord Osory into an adjoining room, which was more like the personification of a fairy-tale than any thing in this nether world; it was high and spacious (albeit unlike those which led to it); the frames of the six windows that opened on one side of it, were entirely concealed by a luxuriant foliage of woodbine and climates, which was trained so as to cover the wall within from the ground to the ceiling, and through which both light and air glanced, and sighed coquettishly; while from branch to branch flitted innumerable birds, of the most beautifully variegated plumage, happy in their limited freedom; others were there in imitation of them, which served to conceal mechan-

ical music, that produced, at intervals, the most enchanting harmony. . . The furniture of the room was so far oriental as that there were no seats beyond ottomans, which were of rose-coloured velvet, with a silver net-work over them ; the carpet was of the same coloured velvet, embroidered with silver lilies ; at the upper end of the room stood an altar, with several broad green marble steps of a circular shape, by which to approach it ; on it burnt two golden censers, full of incense, and in the centre was a figure of Hymen destroying Love ; the urchin's throat was within his grasp, and the expression of expiring life exquisitely pourtrayed in his half-closed eyes ; the arrows were falling listlessly from his quiver, and his unstrung bow lay with his flameless torch amid the fragments of some broken hearts, upon which Hymen was trampling. At either side of the altar were two chef-d'œuvres in sculpture ; the one was a Sappho, throwing herself from the Tar ;

peian rock ; the rock itself, (which was placed in the centre of a very large white marble bason of perfumed water,) was of black marble ; the figure of Sappho was the perfection of art ; for it was *almost nature* ; there was poetry in her attitude, and music in her very hair ; her lyre, (which was a real one) was so constructed, that the chords vibrated to every breath that swept them. The subject of the other was Venus rising from the sea ; her head alone appeared above the shell ; but it was a head of such perfectionized loveliness as to make the beholder almost fancy they were looking it into life.

“ Come, do not turn Pygmalsions, and transfer your souls to those marble divinities,” said Lord Rochester to his companions, as both stood lost in admiration before each of these statues ; “ for it is high time that thou, Buckingham, shouldst enter upon thy calling.” Saying which, he opened a door behind the altar, and, having rolled out a large dressing-glass,

(only that there was no quicksilver at the back of it), he next produced the magician's beard, cap, and robes, which he had described to the Duke the night he supped at his house ; and having equipped him in them, he placed in his hand a long white crystal wand.

“ Now,” said he, “ sit thee on the first step of the altar, George, and look thou as wise as may be, whilst I get thee thy lesson-book ;” upon which he took from the closet a ponderous volume of hieroglyphics, (even larger than the one that had furnished the fate of Sir Ambrose,) with several horoscopes, compasses, &c. &c., and placed it open on the duke's lap.

“ Here,” said he, opening a box, “ are the pastille hearts that my worthy friend José Corvo, Queen Kate's Jew perfumer, has furnished me with ; and, as I have already taught thee the secret of them, thine own discretion or whim must tell thee when to burn the faithful, and when the faithless ones, and they must equally

guide thee in the fantoccini of this magic mirror. All the portraits necessary to insert in it thou wilt find in yonder closet, where Ossory may remain till he is wanting ; and if he is not wanting, why he can see and hear. And I promise thee, Master Dull Child Woeful, even thy gravity must give way to see what fools ‘ Dan Cupid ’ makes of others, even though thou likest not over well to be fooled by him thyself. As for the lights and shadows, George,” he continued, turning to the duke, “ Eden Green will manage all that part of the business for thee ; but here he comes. How now, sirrah, who waits our gracious pleasure?”

“ Two ladies, my Lord. I did not see their faces, and they are dressed as country-women ; but it won’t do — they have Whitehall in their air, the Mall in their gait, and Francisco Corbetta in their voices.”

“ Well, but can none of thy guesses

reach their identity?" asked Lord Rochester.

"None that I have yet ventured, my Lord; and yet I would wager my best Florence cloak, that I have seen the wicked black eyes of the damsel that is with them some where before."

As Master Eden concluded his surmises, a knocking was heard at the door; and on opening it, appeared that worthy and most sagacious of gentlemen-ushers, David Devildike, who had before officiated that morning in conducting Sir Ambrose Templeton to the presence of his gracious employer, and was now come to announce the arrival of another aspirant to the honour of an audience with his lordship.

"Tush, it is that goose Chesterfield," said the Earl, "and I am in no humour for his prosing; and having feasted my friend the knight so amply, little remains to regale *him* with."

"Oh, for that matter, *tarde venientibus ossa*," said the duke.

“True, *quoad* him,” said Rochester, “but *I* who have been here *before* the feast, like not to leave ere the banquet begin ; but this is the last day of my magical reign, and I must not abdicate whilst I have one subject left. So, fare thee well, my worthy minister, and see that *thy* morning’s work be well served and seasoned by dinner time.”

Saying which, he retired to the inner room to administer to the grievances of Lord Chesterfield, and Eden Green was sent to usher the two ladies into the presence of the duke.

“Dear my Lady, only think,” said Alice, entering on tip-toe from the passage, where she had been eagerly and honourably trying to overhear a colloquy on the stairs between the old woman and some other person with whom she was disputing the right of admission ; “only think how lucky it was that you came to-day, for I have just heard that old witch say that the Signor leaves the kingdom to-

morrow ; and there is a gentleman (who, I am sure, is Sir Charles Sedley, by his voice,) trying to force his way up, but she won't let him, for she says that there is another entrance for the men, and that the astrologer is too busy to see him, (I suppose so, for what a time he has kept us;) so I am sure, let him do what he will, he won't get up here, for the old hag is strong enough to conquer ten men, and ugly enough to frighten twenty."

" Pray, Alice," said Lady Cordelia, " come in and shut the door," and at the same time she moved the great unwieldy chair she was sitting in, and sat with her back against it.

Sir Charles Sedley's voice grew louder and louder, and his footsteps more near ; when, to the no small relief of Lady Cordelia, Eden Green appeared at an opposite door, and beckoned to her and Rebecca to follow him, which they immediately did.

“You will remain here till we return, Alice,” said her mistress.

“Oh, yes, my Lady,” said the quiescent damsel, at the same time rummaging in her pocket for a letter, with a look that said pretty plainly, “I have quite enough *here to occupy me.*”

No sooner were Lady Cordelia and her friend in the passage that led to the room in which all futurity was to be revealed to them, than Master Eden produced two blue embroidered handkerchiefs of Persian silk, with which he blindfolded the two ladies, and so led them into Buckingham’s presence.

The duke was seated, with all becoming gravity, on the first step of the altar, where Rochester had placed him; his eyes (which he did not raise till Eden Green had unblinded the bright ones that stood before him,) steadily fixed on the book of fate.

No sooner was the handkerchief removed from Lady Cordelia’s face, than

she was startled by a deep sigh, almost amounting to a faint exclamation, breathed very near her. She looked towards the place from whence the sound had issued, but saw nothing, save the supposed astrologer, and the room, as we have before described it.

Perceiving she did not speak, Buckingham said, in as awful a voice as he could assume, "Daughter, what wouldst thou with me?"

"I have lost," replied Lady Cordelia, half ashamed of her own folly, and blushing as she spoke, "I have lost a trinket more precious to me than all the gems of the East, and would know from you, great Sir, if I may ever hope to find it again, and who has got it? — for I hear your knowledge can even reach *that*."

The scene in Greenwich-park instantly flashed across the duke's recollection. He also remembered how carefully Sedley had tried to conceal the chain from his view which Lady Cordelia had drop-

ped, by keeping his foot upon it ; and, turning over the leaves of the book, with a great apparent depth of scrutiny, he replied :

“ Daughter, that trinket was a chain of Eastern gold, and to that chain was anchored all thy earthly hope ; falsehood has been, *is* still, and will be again linked within that chain. Let me see,” he continued, turning over another leaf, and measuring the circumference of several circles with a compass, “ it was lost to thee amid a fair domain, wherein revelled many bright ladies and gay cavaliers, and there lacked not royalty itself. Thou wert in goodly company at the time ; for albeit thou art not what thy garments would bespeak. But for this chain, thou lost it, as it were, in breaking from another whose yoke thou liked not over well.”

Here the astrologer closed the book, and began leisurely to sprinkle a fine white powder into one of the censers,

which was no sooner done than the apartment became filled with a fragrant and shadowy sort of vapour.

Lady Cordelia and Rebecca (but particularly the former) looked as if they felt perfectly petrified.

The vapour had scarcely passed away, before they heard played, in low silvery tones, the air of a sprightly lavolta, and almost fancied that they also heard soft echo-sounds like fairy footsteps in the air. They looked at one another, but were afraid to speak.

During this invisible ballet, the astrologer sat perfectly unconcerned, making calculations on a lotus-leaf. When it ceased he raised his head, and striking his crystal wand against the step of the altar, an elfin page (alias Eden Green,) appeared instantly, and bowing to the ground, awaited his commands, which he did not deign to intimate in any more explicit manner than by looking to the right, and waving his wand in the air —

a species of oracular communication, however, which his attendant appeared perfectly to comprehend, for he instantly placed the before-mentioned large mirror near him, and instantly withdrew.

“ Daughter,” said the duke, “ thou wouldst know who the knave was that stole thy trinket ; wilt thou see him ?”

“ Willingly, father,” replied the lady, “ if you can shew him to me.”

“ How ! *if* I can shew him to thee,” echoed the pretended astrologer, frowning darkly, “ aye, and much more than thou dreamst of.”

Lady Cordelia made a sort of apologizing inclination of the head ; and Buckingham, taking one of the censers from the altar, began swinging it to and fro, and again filled the room with the same blue fragrant vapour which had overspread it a short time before. This done, a low, solemn sound arose, like the distant chiming of a convent-bell, which continued about ten minutes. When it

ceased, it was succeeded by a loud noise, like a violent clap of thunder. The vapour became more dense as the astrologer stood before the mirror, passing his wand over it, and pronouncing, or rather chanting, an incantation. He next proceeded to throw into some golden urns that were ranged on the ground before the mirror, the contents of a small phial, which occasioned a sound like that of water thrown on fire, and instantly a blue phosphoric flame played round each urn; and, as it gradually ascended, shed a sort of pale, unearthly light over the surface of the glass. As the light increased the vapour decreased; and passing away from the mirror, (as clouds do from before the moon,) discovered to the eyes of the astonished ladies, the counterpart of Sir Charles Sedley!

Lady Cordelia involuntarily grasped Rebecca's arm, as she gazed on the image before her — it wanted nothing of reality but its substance; for this ethereal

and impalpable form appeared to resolve into air, as though it succumbed under the pressure of mortal looks. In short, though she and Lady Berry kept their eyes fixed on it, it vanished as it had come, they knew not how, save that the vapour again overspread the mirror ; and when it dispersed, no trace remained of Sedley. The brilliant but unearthly light which, a few minutes before, illuminated the space, had passed away, and they were left in utter darkness for two or three seconds, when the day-light again gradually filled the room, and appeared doubly vivid from the gloom it succeeded.

When Lady Cordelia had sufficiently recovered from her astonishment and horror to speak, she ventured to enquire if she should ever get back her chain.

“Thou wilt, and thou wilt not,” replied Buckingham, in a most oracular tone, laying strong emphasis on each word, as he slowly spoke them ; “the

d, it was succeeded by a loud noise, violent clap of thunder. The vapour became more dense as the astrologer before the mirror, passing his wand, and pronouncing, or rather uttering, an incantation. He next proceeded to throw into some golden urns ranged on the ground before him, the contents of a small phial, occasioned a sound like that of cannon on fire, and instantly a blue flame played round each urn; gradually ascended, shed a sort of earthly light over the surface.

As the light increased the clouds dissolved; and passing away from before the eyes of the spectators, the appearance of the astrologer of Sir

make Lord Ossory appear in effigy, with the same exactitude he had done Sedley.

“Thou sayest truly,” returned the astrologer, “I do know best what thou wouldst like to see and hear; at least, I know what thou wouldst like to hear, and whom thou wouldst like to see best; but it is a work of more time to summon hither these choice spirits; such vapid souless things as I showed thee last, is but a journeyman’s work to make visible; but ’tis only right that thou shouldst choose the guise in which thou’dst have thy gallant cavalier appear to thee; shall he be all etherial, like a lover’s sigh, breathed in a distant land, on which his mistress never smiled? or wouldst thou have him come in palpable embodied devotion, like to a true suitor, when upon a summer’s night he steals into a lady’s bower, to leave his soul in her fair keeping? But ♀ and ♂ are in conjunction; so I guess thou wilt have sense enough to prefer the latter.”

As he concluded this speech, he walked leisurely to the back of the altar, and entered a door, which he shut with a tremendous crash. Lady Cordelia leant her head on Rebecca's bosom, sick with a thousand contending feelings, of which shame at her own folly, and something more than a faint hope of seeing him whom she would have given worlds to have seen, predominated. The Duke had merely retired to try and induce, or rather to insist on Lord Ossory's acting his part in the rest of the morning's scene, nor was much persuasion necessary with one who had overheard and seen quite enough to make him too happy to think of refusing to oblige any one, particularly when by so doing he gratified himself.

“I wish those cheeks of thine, which generally have so much of that pale-ghost sort of bloom, did not now look so unsupernaturally red, (said Buckingham;) however, thanks to José Corvo's

Greek smoke, and Rochester's phosphoric flames, we may make a tolerably respectable demi-ethereal of thee; but mind, when once behind the mirror, that thou art mute and motionless as Master Eden's hump there yonder." The duke, after this conference, returned; the vapour once more took possession of the chamber, and the whole process that had conjured up Sedley, was again resorted to, but with double effect; for the vapour passed away from the mirror, and discovered to the eyes of Lady Cordelia, not the shade of Lord Ossory, but Lord Ossory himself! She uttered one loud and piercing shriek, and fell lifeless; Ossory rushed, or rather would have rushed towards her, to prevent her falling, had not Buckingham sprung forward, and seizing his arm, hurried him back into the closet, saying, as he double locked the door upon him, "Dost thou want to ruin every thing by such stupid folly, when thou hast time enough to woo,

(ay and win her too,) within the next four-and-twenty hours, without beginning now ; odds life, but I have a mind to spirit thee away for it, Sir Lack-wit," continued the duke, as he struck his crystal wand against the door, while Lord Ossory in vain tried to force it from within.

When Buckingham returned, Lady Cordelia was still insensible, and Rebecca having, imploringly, requested Eden Green to summons the damsel they had left in the ante-room, he (by no means disliking the mission) consented, and soon returned, leading in Mistress Alice, who entered with all the solemnity of respect, unable, however, to resist curling her pretty nose at the perfume of the frankincense which still impregnated the room ; but when she beheld her mistress stretched, as she thought, lifeless on the floor, she lifted up her hands in despair, as she exclaimed, " Ah ! *this* is what comes of believing nothing ; I knew

very well how it would be; I told the lady what she would see, but nothing would make her credit it. However, seeing is believing. Oh dear! oh dear! what *shall* I do? and what *will* my Lord Dorset say?" and in the midst of these and similar lamentations, the officious, and ever ready Master Eden helped her to raise her lady from the ground, and place her on an ottoman, whilst Lady Berry chafed her temples, and the astrologer lost no time in administering some drops, which soon restored animation to his fainting votary. When she again opened her eyes, and recollected where she was, and all she had seen, Lady Cordelia begged that she might instantly be conveyed home.

"Do, good Master Hunch-back, (said Alice, turning to Eden Green, and placing one hand beseechingly on his arm, whilst with the other she supported her mistress's head,) do get, or see that some one gets, a hackney coach as soon

as may be, for see how ill my lady is. Beshrew me, (she continued, lowering her voice,) but the very air of this place is enough to overpower any Christian soul, for it's only fit for imps, witches, and ghosts. —”

“Fair damsel,” said Master Eden, kissing the hand that still honoured his sleeve, “the coach shall be here before you have time to —”

“Box your impertinent ears, Master Malapert,” interposed the offended Alice. The coach soon came, and no sooner were the two ladies and their attendants seated in it, than Mistress Alice again gave vent to her thoughts, which, to do her justice, she seldom was selfish enough to keep to herself.

“Dear, my lady, but you look a marvellous deal better already, now that you have got into the natural air again.”

“I am quite ashamed,” said Lady Cordelia, taking Rebecca's hand, “of all the trouble I have given you, but you

are so kind that I know you do not mind it; and that place was so dreadfully hot that it quite overpowered me."

"It was indeed," replied Rebecca, with a musing look; and the two ladies again relapsed into silence, which ill-suited the magnitude of Alice's curiosity, for she felt assured that it must have taken something more than a hot room to reduce her mistress to such a state; but being determined to obtain the information she desired, or at least, not to miss it through any fault of her own, she had recourse to stratagem, and gave a very theatrical shudder, which produced the desired effect, namely, an enquiry on the part of her mistress as to its cause, which would, she thought, open a channel of communication between them.

"Oh, my lady, do you know that impertinent jackanapes of a hunch-back had the effrontery to kiss my hand when I told him to send for a coach, and when I turned to slap his ugly face (as I

thought, I do declare it was no longer the old wizen one he had a minute before, but such a fair young face, quite beautiful, something like Miss Hamilton's, only, of course, not *quite* so handsome, and I really had not the heart to slap it." As she finished reciting this piece of humanity, the vehicle stopped at Sir Ambrose Templeton's house in Whitehall, and Lady Berry got out; after which, much to pretty Mistress Alice's discomfiture, her lady appeared in no very communicative mood, and no sooner had she arrived at home than she dispensed with her attendance for the rest of the day. In sooth, Lady Cordelia had enough to look back to, and as she now thought *something* to look forward to; among others she anticipated, with no small degree of impatience, the result of *the next night's masquerade*.

CHAP. II.

AT length the long-expected and differently-wished for night of the masquerade arrived. Sir Ambrose left his laboratory, alembics, furnaces, and crucibles, with all their dark treasures, for the gay scene at Whitehall; but he could not leave his own darkened and gloomy spirit, or rather it would not leave him. Rochester, not only recalled from his long banishment, but reinstated at the very pinnacle of royal favour, prepared for it, well armed with lampoons to please, not plague, the king; they were, in fact, a complete treasury of the maids of honour's secrets, collected during his laudable avocation of fortune-telling. The silly Blague and satirical Price were more yellow than amber itself, each secure, in anticipation, of bearing the Lilliputian

Brisacier off in triumph. The languishing Boynton left no aid of dress unsought in the hope of subduing the unsubduable Talbot. The lovely Jennings summoned her best smiles to inflict her worst wounds on her royal lover of York. The beautiful childish Stewart was enjoying the idea of Buckingham's representations after the masquerade, even more than the anticipation of the masque itself. The mischievous, bewitching Hamilton was looking like the very Graces by which she was attired, whilst the poor Princess of Babylon had not left a single yard of gauze and tissue unpurchased in London to do honour to so goodly a fête, little dreaming that her barbarous spouse would arrest her at the very threshold of her joys. Lady Berry was preparing for it with pure, unmixed feelings of pleasure and curiosity, never having seen any thing of the kind before ; and Lady Cordelia, with something more than a vague hope of seeing her former lover, and regaining

her chain ; as the astrologer (in whose predictions she began to have implicit faith) had said that it was not *absolutely* lost, though what the word absolutely meant she could not well tell, or he either, perhaps.

Sedley was, perhaps, the least satisfied of the party, as he was labouring under that mixed feeling of an anticipated revenge, which allows of as many chances of defeat as of success, and therefore furnishes all the torments that such feelings deserve. Unused as he was to meet with any thing but an almost grateful encouragement in quarters where he condescended to bestow his attentions, which were, in the opinion of the court as well as himself, almost equivalent to fame, the very unexpected, and to him unprecedented, rebuff he had met with from Lady Cordelia at Greenwich, had turned his before ardent admiration into as ardent a thirst for revenge ; and fate seemed to favour its fulfilment, by throw-

ing in his way the small gold chain of peculiar workmanship, which was so well known to belong to her. It had now been nearly a week in his possession, without even his fertile imagination being able to contrive any expedient for turning it to account ; that is, for making it publicly appear to have been a *gage-d'amour* of the Lady Cordelia's. But a favourable opportunity for carrying his designs into execution at length presented itself in the shape of this masquerade. So, taking the chain from his neck, he rudely snapped the links asunder, still retaining some of them in his possession for a future emergency, in case his present plot should fail ; which was nothing less than to indite a copy of appropriate verses, that should convey an idea of his devoted attachment to Lady Cordelia, and of her heartless coquetry towards him, enveloping the fragments of the chain in them, and then dropping the packet in some corridor, where he knew

either Charles or his satellites Buckingham, Rochester, and others would be sure to pass; and then he had no fear of the whole affair not soon becoming as public as his utmost vanity and vengeance could desire. So intent was he on these *important stanzas* that Master Upton, his gentleman in waiting, had thrice intruded as far as the door, to know whether it was his pleasure to dress, as it was growing late, and His Grace of Buckingham would call to take him to Whitehall at eight.

At length his toilette was begun and ended; and he sprang into his grace's coach with no small degree of exultation at the anticipated success of his well-laid scheme. To the duke's raillery on his unwonted dulness, he thought fit to remain as silent as though nature had denied him both wit and speech by which to convey it.

On their arrival at the palace the duke left him, saying with a laugh, as he laid

his hand on his shoulder, "In sooth, Sir Dullard, you have usurped Sedley's form; but, as I am somewhat choice in my companions at a revel, I must e'en seek Sedley's *spirit* under some other guise; so fare thee well, Child Lack-wit."

Sedley had not passed twice through the first suite of rooms, before he detected Rochester and the king by their echo-laugh, for which they were so famed; and, gliding past them, dropped the treacherous packet, when he concealed himself within the recess of a window; and, from his ambush, he had the satisfaction of not only observing the movements of the monarch and his group, but of overhearing their conversation.

"Ho!" said Rochester, springing forward and seizing the packet, "does the scent lie in that direction?"

"Nay," said the king, "we claim half your discoveries; for, if our eyes deceive us not, that should be some love-gaud, inclosed within a bill of fare of

sighs and tears ; have we hit the mark, my lord ? My crown to a goose-egg but it's some half-marred assignation of Denham's."

"As your majesty cannot lay the odds," replied Rochester, "I hold it not a fair bet ; besides, I rather suspect the matter rests with Sedley, and, moreover, that he mistook his genius when he set up for his own Mercury. But be that as it may, it is a waif on these premises, and as such belongs to the lord of the manor," he added, handing it to the king, who lost no time in reading the following lines aloud : —

"Ay, gaze upon this broken chain,
Exult that thou art free ;
And when its links unite again,
Rejoice, 'tis not for me.

Gild with thy smiles each darken'd shade
A broken heart may leave ;
Or with the flaws despair has made,
'Twill not again deceive.

Then to thy victim fondly seem
To bear its weight in part ;
Like me the wretch will madly dream,
And hug it to his heart ;

Will deem the soul of those dark eyes,
Life, truth, glory, love,
And barter, for the phantom prize,
Fame here, and bliss above.

Go then, thou false one, do thy worst
Of witchery and woe ;
Sighs from thy fragrant lip may burst,
Tears from thy bright eye flow.

But there *are* looks and tones of thine,
Thou canst not give again ;
What, tho' my heart's a ruin'd shrine,
Those relics still remain,

Fresh as when first devotion laid
Them there as types of thee ;
Yet how *unlike* — for thou'st betray'd,
And *they* still cling to me.

They'll tell thee that my love for thee
Was but a passing breath ;
And *wilt* thou doubt th' eternity
Of faith that's seal'd by death?

Of love that knew nor change nor chill,
Thro' joy, thro' grief the same ;
That had no goal beyond thy will —
No wish beyond thy fame ?

Or wilt thou, when my dead name's breath'd
By hatred in thine ear,
With envy's Upas malice wreath'd,
Believe each tale thou'lt hear ?

I ask not thou shouldst waste one sigh
To hallow my lone urn ;
No, those of old, which cannot die,
Shall deep within it burn.

But when my shade shall be pursued
With tales of infamy,
Prove thou 'twas virtue that I woo'd,
Proclaim my love for *thee* !"

Strange as it may seem that the witty, the fascinating, the admired, the sought-after Sir Charles Sedley should voluntarily become the rejected hero of a love ditty; yet it must be confessed, that he had felt for Lady Cordelia a something that approached nearer to real affection than he had ever experienced for any other woman : and, as for the figure he might cut in his own verses, he had *not been Sedley* if he could not, when rallied by his profligate associates on the subject, recant every syllable of it, by proving to

their, and his own entire satisfaction, that the sum total of a thousand love-vows amounts to nought.

“Surely,” said Rochester, “when the king had finished their perusal, “Dan Cupid is but a journeyman after all ; and we had better forswear the trade, if such a genius for it as Sedley fares no better than this. Out upon the craft, say I, since half a life’s apprenticeship cannot ensure success.”

“But the chain, the chain,” said the king, “whose may that be ? A fair clue, no doubt, given to that Theseus Sedley, to wind him through the mazes of love’s labyrinth, more complicated than that of Crete ; but for the hapless Ariadne that owns it, methinks, my lords, ’twould be but a merry chace to seek her, and a kind one to restore it.”

“That chain,” cried Lord Arlington, “is to me as an old friend, whose face is familiar, but whose name I may by no means remember. But what if you keep

it, Sire, and by some well-timed *ruse de guerre*, extract its history from Sedley?"

"Nay," replied the good-natured monarch, "that plan savours too much of treachery."

This, however, seemed but a strange objection in the opinion of the chamberlain, for its not being carried into effect; but silence now stood his friend, as it had often done before : for which reason, as the witty and acute author of *Hudibras* observes, "The deficiency of his integrity was forgiven in the decency of his dishonesty."

"Here comes his Grace of Bucks," observed Rochester, "and if any one can help us to a solution of this mystery, *he* can ; for there is not a gaud about court, but he can tell its whole history, with the how, the when, and the where, from beginning to end."

"Ha ! George," said the king, as the duke joined them, "is it so — and can

you, indeed, tell us to whom this trinket belongs ?”

“Will not your majesty hazard a surmise as to a matter I thought every body was acquainted with ?” replied Buckingham.

“I must confess my ignorance,” said the king, “for I swear to you by the handsomest eyes in our kingdom, (and his glanced in search of the fair Stewart’s as he spoke,) that I know nothing of this chain, further than having found it within the last half hour, enveloped in a copy of verses of Sedley’s writing, in which he gives timely notice that he is to die immediately, and requests the fair inhuman to whom they are addressed, to proclaim to the world that it was virtue *he* wooed.”

“Now, by mine honour,” cried the duke, “he gives himself but half his due of praise there ; for so generous was he of this said virtue, when he’d won it (for of course the *irresistible* Sedley could not

woo *without winning*,) that he never retained a particle of it for himself."

"Truth was the father of that speech, wit its mother, and courage its sponsor; and yet, most noble duke, it hath a fault," quoth Rochester.

"To what may your wisdom allude?"

"To thine having, at its very outset, saddled another mortgage on thine honour, sweet Bucks, which hath already more incumbrances than all the veracity *thou* wilt ever be master of, can clear off."

Notwithstanding the duke's love of jokes, and his extravagance to procure them, yet a vein of economy ran through his profusion — for he liked them not at his own expence; and, at this ill-timed jest of Rochester's, a cloud gathered on his brow, which the king perceiving, exclaimed, "Ods life! my lords, we shall have no ball to-night; we had to wait quite long enough before for the history of the Chevalier de Gramont's varlet of a servant's quicksand expedi-

tion, (which was, in sooth, worth waiting for,) as is, we doubt not, the memoirs of this chain; but haste ye, Buckingham, for there are audible and visible signs of impatience — the fiddles squeak discordantly; yonder herd of cavaliers, vagrants, and troubadours, sweep their mandolins and guitars as though they would shiver them to atoms; Miss Hamilton has been standing for the last half hour, with her right foot pointed, ready to begin a minuet; and our Brother of York is darting intercepted glances, through innumerable arms, at the inexorable Jennings."

"That chain," said the duke, "belongs to that perfectionized piece of fascination and cruelty, the Lady Cordelia Trevillion; and so inseparable an appendage was it of hers, that I have often thought *it* contained some spell to render her insensible; but how is this? it is broken, and so, perchance, is the spell, if spell there was;" and as he concluded,

Buckingham chuckled at the partial and accidental fulfilment of the random prophecy he had uttered to Lady Cordelia.

“Be that as it may,” said the king, “I will restore it to her myself; and furthermore, my lords, it is my pleasure, that the story goes not beyond the present hearers, for my mind misgives me, but Sedley came not altogether so fairly by it. Meanwhile, as none will unmask till midnight, you cannot aid me in my search for the fair owner;” saying which he walked away to commence the ball, for which event there had been no lack of impatience.

“Well!” said Rochester, with a sneer, “though the age aboundeth in wonders, I never thought I should live to hear so great a one, as our *wise* monarch issuing a decree to have our lips hermetically sealed, as to the *pros* and *cons* of a Sedleian love affair; but *tempora mutantur et nos mutamur ab illis*; is it not so, friends?”

“ I know not,” said a tall figure, that glided past them, waving a wand in a circular direction as he spoke ; “ I know not if you *will* change, but if you *do*, it ‘ is a consummation most devoutly to be wished,’ as in such persons *any* change must be for the *better*. ”

“ Well done, Sir Conjuror ! ” cried the unabashed group.

“ By thy cone-like cap, and bear-like beard, thou hast the very pith and essence of a wit — resource ; for when thou canst not cut with the sharp weapon of a polished sarcasm, thou dost hack and amputate with the blunt razor of ill-nature ; *this* is true atticism,” said Buckingham.

“ Now does my project gather to a head, my charms crack not, and my spirits obey,” * said the figure, attired as Prospero, beckoning with his wand.

“ By all that’s lovely, thou sayest truly, that thy charms fail not, and thy-

* Tempest, Act 4th, Scene the 1st.

spirits obey, if yon host of charms, yon beauteous spirit, hath aught to do with thee," said the duke, as he looked at a form which advanced, habited as *Ariel*; fair as the fabled houris, and sylph-like enough to have been, in reality, the being of spiritual loveliness which it personated; the glittering azure dress, studded with stars, which she wore, seemed as if it had been formed from the light clouds of upper air; the gossamer wings were so shadowy, so impalpably delicate, as to have no fixed appearance to the vision; her golden hair fell like a shower of sun-beams on her snowy shoulders, encircled by a diamond fillet, only less radiant than the eyes beneath it, which, in spite of the mask that concealed the rest of her face, shone like two stars in an eastern heaven. In her rear was a wheat-crowned Ceres, with a form that might have suited the chisel of the sculptor, or served for the study of a painter; yet was it without that magic of beauty

which played round the *Ariel* whom she followed.

“ All hail, great master !” said the latter, approaching Prospero. “ Grave Sir, hail ! I come to answer thy best pleasure, be it to fly ; to swim ; to dive into the fire ; to ride on the curled clouds ; — to thy strong bidding task *Ariel*, and all his qualities.” *

Pros. — “ That’s my brave spirit.”

“ Sweet spirit !” cried Rochester, Buckingham, (and Sedley, who had thought fit to draw near, under favour of his mask,) “ what are we, that you will not e’en deign to look our way ?”

Ariel — “ You are three men of sin.”

“ Mum, then, and no more, proceed,” said Rochester, personating Stephano, for the occasion.

Pros. — “ Spirit, we must prepare to meet with Caliban.”

Ariel — “ Aye, my commander, when

I presented Ceres, I thought to have told thee of it ; but I feared, lest it might anger thee."

Pros. — " But say again, where didst thou leave these varlets ?"

Ariel — " I told you, Sir, they were red-hot with drinking, so full of valour, that they smote the air for breathing in their faces ; beat the ground for kissing their feet ; yet always bending towards their project."

Pros. — " This was well done, my bird." Here a most inhuman looking Calaban advanced towards the group, and whispering something in Ariel's ear, which caused her to tremble violently, he rolled past them ; and Prospero, Ceres, and the spirit instantly followed, and were, for some minutes, lost in the crowd : when they were again visible, Calaban had left them.

" Now, trust our sapient monarch for hunting down the best game," said Rochester, " look ye yonder, if he be not

already in deep parley with that bright Ariel that was with us anon."

"Ay, truly," rejoined Buckingham, "and he is, moreover, regaling her with a sight of those dainty rhymes of Sedley's, and the mystical chain, and yet he will not give it her ; I marvel much how Charley's gallantry can resist such a suppliant."

Sedley waited for no more, but darted off in the direction to which Lord Rochester had called their attention ; from the symmetry of the figure, he had decided that Ariel and Lady Cordelia were one, and, consequently, was in the act of following her, when a flower-girl came up, and tapping his arm with a bunch of roses, asked him, in an ironical tone, meant for the king's ear, if he did not think them ugly, colourless things, compared to the matchless Stewart's cheeks.

Sedley, who knew her by her voice to be Lady Castlemaine, and who framed his answer as much for Charles as for

her, replied, “*I* know nothing, pretty one, of the cheeks in question ; but I do know cheeks, next to which those flowers would be as you say.”

“And where may such cheeks dwell?” enquired the lady.

“ They dwell in the *castle*,
They dwell in the *main* ;
They dwell in my heart,
Where they ever must reign.”

“Nay, I know who’s the author of that compliment,” said she, linking her arm within Sedley’s ; “for when Minerva fails him, Sir Charles Sedley never spares his Pegasus.”

Sedley would fain have relinquished the honour of escorting her ladyship to some more worthy *cicesbio* ; but, alas ! none appeared ; and he was doomed the whole evening to endure the tantalizing situation of being so near, and yet so far from the object of his pursuit, and whom he had the additional torment of seeing followed, admired, and dancing with all

the most fascinating and formidable of his rivals ; and, what was worse than all, of knowing that the chain and verses, from which his vanity had expected such a triumph, were as safe from publicity as if they were in the " Tomb of all the Capulets." Still he was unwilling to resign all hope. He expected, he knew not exactly what ; but he had a presentiment that something would happen at supper ; nor was he, perhaps, altogether mistaken.

At a little after midnight, the masquers began adjourning to the banquetting-hall, which was splendidly decorated for the occasion. The gloom of the richly-carved oak wainscotting was dispelled by the profusion of light and flowers that adorned it — the former arranged so as to have the appearance of stars sparkling between the fresh and variegated leaves, while fountains of iced and perfumed water, placed within these mimic bowers, diffused an enchanting coolness through the atmosphere. The musicians were out of

sight, and their distant harmony only stole on the ear at intervals, like the seraph music of a dream.

The hall soon filled ; and among the many lovely there, shone the fair Stewart, the loveliest of all, sparkling in her new diamonds.

The king was to pledge the fairer part of the assemblage, as a signal to unmask ; for which purpose, when seated, the Lord Arlington presented him with a richly-embossed golden goblet, chased round with jewels. On receiving it he rose ; and withdrawing his own mask, which he flung on the ground, said —

“ So fare all the envious screens that conceal the beauteous features around us.”

The ladies lost no time in revealing their faces ; and as the masks vanished, every eye was turned on *Ariel*, *Prospero*, and *Ceres*, who proved to be, Sir Ambrose Templeton, Lady Berry, and Lady Cordelia Trevillion !

The king left his place, and advancing towards the latter, said in an audible voice :

“ Lady, I find I have made a rash promise, in vowing to resign your chain — one that I should have known to be vain had I seen that face at the time ; but though *you* acted unfairly by me, in retreating behind a masked battery, and thus concealing from me the extent of the danger I had to encounter, *I* will e’en deal fairly by you ; and, in restoring it, redeem my pledged honour, but crave as a reward, that you tell me if it was early in the evening you lost it ? ”

“ Your majesty mistakes,” said Lady Cordelia, bowing gracefully as she received the chain ; “ it was not to-night I lost it, but a week ago at Greenwich. On returning home I missed it ; and, after searching for it every where in vain, I concluded it had dropped into the Thames ; in which belief I should have continued, Sire, but for your kindness,

for which I cannot sufficiently thank you."

As she finished speaking, the Calaban, who had before accosted her, put his head over her shoulder, and again whispered something which, though it appeared to excite in her some violent agitation, was evidently an emotion of extreme pleasure, rather than of anger or fear; but on turning, it might be to answer him, he had (as in the early part of the night) vanished,

" like the baseless fabric of a vision,
And left not a track behind,"

for he was no where to be seen. The king, perceiving her embarrassment, with all that kindliness of manner he could so gracefully assume, gallantly replied to the thanks she had bestowed on him for restoring the chain, by saying,

" It is a sad temptation to one's integrity, to have the imputed merit of obliging the Lady Cordelia Trevillion ;

yet, in this instance, fate did not stand my friend so much as to allow me to deserve it; as I believe, lady, from these lines which I found with the trinket, that you owe its restoration to Sir Charles Sedley."

As Lady Cordelia glanced her eye over them, a blush of indignation suffused her cheek; but, almost instantly recovering her presence of mind, she returned them to the king, saying,

"Sire, I have no right to pry into Sir Charles Sedley's secrets by reading these verses, which have evidently no relation whatever to me; and the least I can do, in acknowledgment of the good office he *meditated* towards me, (had not your majesty forestalled his intent,) is to restore him his lines in return for my chain."

As she laid them on the table, Rochester, who gloried in tormenting Sedley, placed them on the point of his sword, as he would the wing of a chicken at the end of a fork, and handed them to

him across the table, congratulating him, with a malicious smile, on his good fortune in having found them, as it would save him the trouble of inditing a supplementary sonnet to the nymph for whom they were intended.

As Sir Ambrose, in his magician's robes, was rather a formidable-looking personage, his majesty accosted him most graciously, as a sort of preface to his beautiful wife, whom he begged might be presented to him. This done, he gallantly said,

“ If we ever have another mask, after seeing that face, it will be a libel on our taste.”

Notwithstanding the revel was only in its zenith, the knight found it late, and signified to Lady Cordelia, that he thought it high time to depart; or, in plain English, he thought there were more royal glances by half than were requisite for mere courtesy, bearing towards Rebecca. Lady Cordelia was by no

means reluctant to return home, in order to enjoy the pleasure of having found her much-prized chain, and the equally great one of having foiled Sedley's malice; and, though last not least, perhaps to dream over those words of dear import the Calaban had twice whispered in her ear.

Meanwhile Sedley left the palace, burning with rage and resentment at having been foiled by the goodnature of the king, and the innocent shrewdness of Lady Cordelia. He was by no means sparing of the maledictions he bestowed on the phalanx of link-boys he had to wade through; but having at length succeeded in getting clear of them, he swore his way to Charing-cross; and much appalled was his gentleman in waiting, the worthy Master Upton, at his portentous-looking visage, as he lighted him up the gloomy oaken stairs to his apartment. No sooner had they entered, than his master flung his sword from him,

and industriously pulled the feathers in his hat to pieces, a sure sign that all was not right.

“ A brave mask at Whitehall to-night, no doubt, Sir Charles ?” ventured Master Upton.

“ Peace, varlet !” was the gracious reply.

“ There has been a stripling here thrice to-night, Sir, with a letter from pretty Mistress Davis, of the king’s house.”

“ Get out of my sight, scoundrel !”

“ Scoundrel, indeed !” echoed Sir Charles’s gentleman, as he pulled the door after him. “ Scoundrel ! and so, forsooth, he can never be crossed in his devilries, but he must treat me to a ragoût of knaves, and scoundrels, and villains, and varlets when he comes home. At other times it is a different story, I warrant ; *then* its ‘ My worthy Upton *here*, or honest Master Upton *there*,’ when there is question of an ex-

pedition, that promises *me* all the glory of getting one or two of my ribs broken, or my skull cracked, through his fancy for other men's wives. Heigh! how's this? who knows but he may next take a fancy to his *own man's* wife. Oh! Mistress Agnes Upton, Mistress Agnes Upton, I must keep a sharp look out upon *you*, when you come into this devil's den of a house. Aye, he's a born devil; but the fellow-humour to this, I *never* saw him in. What if the Duke of Bucks *was* better dressed? or if my Lord Rochester *did* outdo him in a *bon-mot*? or if he found himself superseded in the good graces of his mistress by a new lap-dog? What cause, I say, is one or all of these for his treating me in this way? None — none whatever. I'd rather (continued Master Upton, who, during his courtship of Mistress Agnes, had contracted a habit of rhyming when in a dilemma, which he afterwards never left off) —

“ I'd rather have the coarsest pallet,
Than be Sir Charles Sedley's valet.”

And, so saying, he flung himself on his
down bed, and soon forgot Mistress
Agnes, his master, and himself.

CHAP. III.

ALTHOUGH the monarch's speech was nothing more than a few words of courtly gallantry to the fair Rebecca, they carried a weight with them to the suspicious mind of Sir Ambrose, which rendered him so listless and uneasy, that he was glad to seize the first convenient moment to withdraw his wife from the revel. The prediction of the magicians hung heavily about his heart.

"Her place shall be soon by another's side," rang like a death-knell constantly in his ears. What did he portend? — either that she would prove unfaithful, or he was doomed to die. Rather did he believe the former than the latter, as likely to happen. Had not Rebecca, since he had brought her to London, been sought, followed, and admired by

all the nobles within the centre of the Court ; and since her growing intimacy with Lady Cordelia, had she not rather invited than discouraged their perpetually frequenting her mansion, for she never closed her door against company.

Rebecca had insensibly caught something of Lady Cordelia's captivating manner ; she likewise had attained more self-possession, which gave an easy playfulness to her conversation, full of *naïveté*, and so unlike the studied Court beauties, as to render her peculiarly attractive ; and Lady Berry of late had become quite the fashion.

There was no effort necessary in sustaining the simple character of *Ceres* ; but whether it was her well-assorted dress, her graceful movements, or the borrowed lustre reflected from the brilliant Cordelia, which gave Rebecca additional charms, it was difficult to say ; but so it was, that while Sir Charles Sedley pursued the bright *Ariel*, Lady Berry was sur-

rounded by motley groups, gazing on her with admiration, and speaking to her with adulation.

The ever-changing Buckingham, perpetually seeking something new, particularly when decked in the guise of loveliness, eagerly sought to discover who might be the *Ceres* of the night; for though her face was veiled from mortal eye, her figure displayed all that sculptured grace so redolent in youthful beauty, formed to captivate the taste of the voluptuary; and his Grace of Buckingham was too nice a connoisseur for Lady Berry to escape his exclusive notice.

Sir Ambrose in vain endeavoured to rally his spirits. He was gloomy, abstracted and miserable; and it was only when efforts were required to sustain his character, that he for a moment shut his ears against the ill-timed compliments which poured in from all quarters on his wife.

It was not till the company were seated

at the banquet, the Duke of Buckingham discovered Lady Berry in *Ceres* ; though from the tone of her voice, he suspected it, and was fain to continue the species of tormenting cruelty practised so successfully on the preceding Monday towards her credulous and superstitious husband, enjoying, with malignant merriment, the influence the late scene had upon his spirits ; for it was evident that he was jealous and suspicious of every person who even approached Lady Berry.

Rebecca had been so much diverted with the night's revel, as not to have remarked the listlessness and frowning discontent which sat on her husband's brow.

The scene was so novel and amusing, she was quite engrossed by its endless variety. The conclusion had proved most agreeable, as related to Lady Cordelia ; for she fully participated in the joy which she experienced in the recovery of her chain, a relic so precious ; nor was

she sorry for her triumph over the vain, invidious Sedley, whose conduct proved he liked to mortify and torment.

When Sir Ambrose Templeton arrived at home, the effort to support his spirits was at an end. Ashamed, however, to reveal this weakness to his wife, and the prediction which preyed on his mind, he desired her to go to her chamber, as he meant to spend some hours in his laboratory before he retired for the night.

Rebecca now first observed the ghastly expression of his countenance; the wildness of his eyes, and an agitation in his manner quite unusual. She was alarmed; but accustomed always to obey Sir Ambrose, and somewhat afraid of him, she merely cast on him a look of anxious enquiry as she was leaving the room. His eye at the moment was so steadily and earnestly fixed on her, that when her eyes met his, the beaming benignity and placid sweetness of Rebecca's made him ashamed of the unjust surmises he

had been prone to form ; and saluting her with kindness he said, " You look pale and weary, Rebecca, go to rest."

" In sooth," he continued, " it was a motley scene of folly, of which we partook to-night. Some of the characters, I suspect, were only drest in their natural guise, when they wore a fool's coat on their back. Then the palavering flattery ; the fulsome nonsense Buckingham and other of his majesty's creatures poured into your ear, was enough to turn the brain of a young woman with even more good sense than my discreet Rebecca."

" I could only smile," she timidly replied, " at all I heard ; and observe, that his Grace of Buckingham, who is quite a courtier, and, therefore, an adept in flattery, had taken an additional lesson from Sir Charles Sedley. Though I have lived so short a period beneath the contagious influence of its honied breath,

be assured, such flowery compliments have not reached beyond my ears."

"Nor shall they," he answered hastily, "while I have the power to prevent it."

Sir Ambrose paused for a few minutes, and walked the room in gloomy abstraction. At length he proceeded gravely, and fixing his eagle-eyes upon his wife — "Tell me, Rebecca, and tell the truth; should you grieve to leave all the gaieties of the court for retirement?"

Rebecca coloured, looked down, and was silent.

"Ah!" cried he, with quickness, darkly scowling, and again pacing the room, "I see how it is. Like the rest of your sex, you have already imbibed a taste for pleasure. You like amusement — vanity — adulation — true woman. Lady Cordelia Trevillion, too, with all her sense, is easily lured into the snare, and is open to flattery, unguarded, impru-

dent, else she would not have tolerated Sir Charles Sedley : —

“ Who can, with a resistless charm, impart
“ The loosest wishes to the chastest heart.”

Though chaste, she assuredly is, or she should be no companion for my wife.”

Again he was silent for some minutes, and then continued : —

“ But, before it is too late, we will remedy the coming evil ; we will change the scene, Rebecca ; not for the gloom of Gloomore Castle, but for livelier places. We will visit foreign countries ; fresh knowledge will be imparted to you of a more improving nature than all the frivolity you have lately witnessed. We will converse further on the matter to-morrow.”

Rebecca answered Sir Ambrose, by saying, “ Whatever he willed, she was ready to accede to.”

She spent a sleepless night, ruminating on her husband's sudden intention to

quit the kingdom. Brought up in the cheerful, tranquil scenes of domestic life, Rebecca sought not, wished not, for that courtly splendour, and voluptuous dissipation in which she had lived for the last three months. Yet, so insensibly had she been initiated in them, so seducing to her mind were all its glittering pleasures, that Rebecca was scarcely aware, without strict self-examination, how much they had gained upon her taste and imagination. She was dazzled with the splendour of the court; captivated with those soft insinuating manners, which stole upon her senses, and she never had tasted such enjoyment in any society as that which the brilliant Lady Cordelia and her satellites afforded.

In the comparative retirement in which she formerly lived, she was happy and contented; she had known no other; but now elevated, not merely into high rank, but a brilliant sphere, where she possessed her own share of admiration

and adulation, it would not have been human nature, if Rebecca had felt otherwise than she did. The wife of a gloomy, superstitious misanthrope, to whom she was united, not from affection, but only from a sense of honour and principle ; had she not been satisfied and pleased with the station she filled in society, and which she had no inclination to vary, she would have been unlike other young women, so redolent in youth and beauty.

When Sir Ambrose named his intention of leaving London in the meridian of its gaiety, she could not conceal her astonishment and chagrin, at so unlooked-for a circumstance ; and while the colour mounted to her cheeks, she was quite unable at the moment to make a reply. Afterwards, a just sense of the obedience due to a husband, made her ready to go where he pleased.

CHAP. IV.

REBECCA, after waiting breakfast a considerable time for Sir Ambrose, at length ventured to send and enquire if he chose his to be sent to his laboratory, where he had passed the whole of the night. She dared not break in upon his privacy ; but she began to be uneasy at his non-appearance.

After his gentleman in waiting had knocked repeatedly at his door, Sir Ambrose at length opened it a-jar, and putting his head out, fiercely demanded what he required, and why he had presumed to disturb him ?

Bowing submissively, he delivered his message.

“ Tell your lady,” he answered, more mildly, “ not to disturb me again. I shall join her at dinner.”

Rebecca, almost as unhappy as her

husband, whose former ferocity of character appeared to be returning, in vain endeavoured to amuse herself with a book. She could not, however, keep her attention alive, and therefore determined, as Sir Ambrose had said they were not to meet until dinner, to walk to Lady Cordelia's ; for in her society she always experienced relief to her spirits, as well as pleasure.

She found her friend seated at a table, so deeply engaged in perusing what appeared to be a large packet of letters ; she scarcely looked up on her entrance. Beside the packet lay an open case, containing the miniature picture of a youth, in all the bloom of health and loveliness ; and as Rebecca approached, from the partial glance she gave, recognised a perfect resemblance to the shade that had passed before them at Signior Manfredi's on the former day.

Lady Berry also remarked the chain, such a source of grief and misery was

again suspended from Lady Cordelia's neck. The golden heart, she guessed, was fixed close to that warm heart, now throbbing with undiminished joy, if she might judge by the radiant lustre of her bright eyes, as they gladly beamed upon her.

"Dear Lady Cordelia," exclaimed Rebecca, "I now may use your own phrase once to me, 'You look so happy — how I envy you.'"

"Not quite happy yet," she returned, with a half-suppressed sigh; "but," she added, more gaily, "I have got back my chain, at least a part of it, which, by some artful wile of Sir Charles Sedley's, probably would never have been restored to its proper owner, if it had not fortunately fallen into the keeping of our good-natured monarch."

"Is there witchery in the chain," said Lady Berry, half-smiling, and looking archly, "that its recovery imparts such joy?"

“ ‘Thereby hangs a tale,’ ” replied the lady; “ but ’tis a rueful one. Some day I may tell you some of my youthful follies; for most young girls have the folly of falling desperately in love before they have considered all the miseries appertaining to so disastrous a case. But, in truth, sweet Rebecca, since you have borne so kind a share in all my griefs, (for I have grieved almost to frenzy,) it is but generous now to impart their origin.

“ Look at this picture,” she proceeded, presenting that of Lord Ossory lying on the table, “ tell me if it is not a face to steal hearts less easy to be won than mine; nor can it be a wonder, with such a face so faultless, a person so graceful, and a mind as perfect, he took captive the many of all womankind he seemed born to subdue.

“ We will pass over the mysterious adventure of yesterday morning, and recur

alone to my first acquaintance with Lord Ossory."

Lady Cordelia related to Rebecca all the particulars already detailed; and concluded by acknowledging how entirely her future happiness depended on the fulfilment of the magician's prediction; confessing she was very sanguine in her expectation, from the miraculous restoration of the chain, which had been given as a pledge of constancy and affection, by Lord Ossory, in the dawn of their love and happiness.

Rebecca always suspected that the Lady Cordelia had some latent sorrow, some tender attachment which preyed on her heart; for, at times, her vivacity was overstrained; and, while her brow was clouded with sadness, her mouth was dressed in smiles. So rich, so young, so powerful, so highly-gifted with talent, so captivating in address, it was not likely she was fated to spend her days in the sober sadness of widowhood, nor that she

would so scornfully reject the numerous admirers who pressed their suit, had her affections been disengaged.

For the present, Rebecca forgot her own cares in listening to Lady Cordelia's interesting narrative; but time had worn so speedily away, she had not a moment left to impart her uneasiness, and could only say, as she took leave of Lady Cordelia, "your sun of happiness is rising, mine, probably, will soon be set for ever; and, though we may meet no more, my fervent good wishes, my tender remembrance will attend you to the end of life."

"What do you mean?" cried the lady, "like your husband, you speak in mystery."

"Mystery, indeed!" replied Rebecca, "if you knew all. Ah! dear Lady Cordelia, I soon shall leave you to go I know not whither. Sir Ambrose means to travel into foreign countries, and of late seems to have given himself up to all that gloomy superstition which has grown

upon him since he held discourse with his Grace of Buckingham. Surely astrology is the science of the evil one."

"Sir Ambrose," interrupted Lady Cordelia, "positively shall not take you from us. I must talk to him. It would be barbarous indeed. No, it cannot, it shall not be; rather will we take out a statute of lunacy against him, if he acts so like a madman. Tell it not in Gath, Rebecca. But I heard it whispered that Buckingham, and that arch fiend Rochester, had so imposed upon his credulity last night at the masquerade, by their machiavelian arts, as to send him home almost ripe for bedlam; all the time laughing in their sleeves (this I accidentally overheard) at the mischief they had achieved."

Rebecca, already beyond the hour of returning home, could not stay even for a farther explanation, and quitted Lady Cordelia with very uneasy sensations to.

meet Sir Ambrose, who was in no very pleasant mood.

The interesting history which Lady Cordelia had unfolded of herself, would have occupied all Rebecca's thoughts, if her own uncertain destiny had not awakened the most painful anxiety.

She had only time to change her dress on reaching Whitehall, when she was summoned to dinner.

Naturally timid, Rebecca trembled with apprehension when Sir Ambrose entered the room, doubtful in what sort of humour he would meet her. His brow still was overcast, though he tried to address her with a forced smile of complacency. She did not speak, she was afraid, for he did not like to be noticed even with the common place salutations of the day.

"Have you been at home all the morning, Rebecca?" he carelessly enquired.

"Not all the morning; I went to con-

gratulate Lady Cordelia on the recovery of her chain."

"A yoke," he returned sarcastically, "Sedley, it should seem, was unwilling longer to wear; though, according to his love-ditty, the lady must have given him no slight encouragement, and then was indignant and surprised that he presumed upon it; but you women would gladly make all mankind your slaves, and put them into leading strings."

Rebecca dared not, in Sir Ambrose's presence, attempt any vindication of Lady Cordelia's conduct, and therefore remained silent. It was but recently she had herself thought that Lady Cordelia had favoured Sir Charles Sedley's advances; and though now, from her late declaration, she was convinced of the contrary, yet, to the eye of the world, she certainly seemed to have encouraged his presuming freedoms, and Sir Charles Sedley was not a man to be easily repulsed.

The dinner passed over in gloomy silence and gloomy state. After the servants were dismissed, Sir Ambrose, who had remarked the dejection of his wife's countenance, at length said, "Are you more reconciled than you were last night to the idea of leaving London, and all its foolish pageantries?"

"That they tend not to happiness, I am quite sure," Rebecca answered, "yet there are some individuals I shall be very sorry to leave."

"May I enquire who they are?"

"Certainly; Lady Cordelia Trevillion for instance."

"And *only* Lady Cordelia?" he interrupted with quickness, darting his eagle eye upon her.

"Only Lady Cordelia as a friend; but several, perhaps," she replied, "as general and amusing acquaintances, whom I cannot particularize."

The frank simplicity with which Lady Berry spoke silenced her husband,

Again there was another wearisome pause ; at length he continued, " Was there not some engagement for this evening ; some water party to Greenwich ? Make the most of your time, Rebecca, in the way of amusement, for soon this life of junketing and frolic will have an end."

" I am not," she returned, " desirous to go to Greenwich to-night, if, Sir Ambrose, it is displeasing to you."

" No, Rebecca, I do not wish to baulk you in any innocent recreation ; go, by all means, along with Lady Cordelia, only do not stay late."

Rebecca was to be at Lady Cordelia's house early in the evening : not a little anxious to see her again after their interview in the morning, and to hear more, should an opportunity offer, of the interesting Lord Ossory, she quickly equipt herself for the evening's pastime, and proceeded to Lady Cordelia's.

Instead of finding her awaiting her

arrival, what was Lady Berry's astonishment and dismay on being told, that Lady Cordelia had gone to her chamber very ill, having been seized with a succession of fainting fits.

CHAP. V.

SEDLEY had changed his plans, and with them his humour ; and the next morning Master Upton was summoned to his levee with as many smiles and gracious words, as he had been dismissed with frowns and imprecations the night before. But, albeit, unaware of the alteration that had taken place in his master's mood, it was with strong symptoms of what the vulgar denominate fear, that this worthy personage entered with the flask of chambertin, and cold pheasant, that was to constitute his patron's morning repast. What then was his delight at finding, that the most luxuriant and halcyon of calms had succeeded to the most tempestuous of hurricanes ; and even that half a toilet had been achieved without his assistance. But as no human

felicity can be perfect, a dark cloud came over all this sunshine, as Master Upton's telescopic mind discovered through the vistas of some vague suspicions, another dwarf-and-giant compact, from which his master was to reap fresh glory, and he incur new danger ; nor did he feel in any degree less convinced of this by the very bland and courteous manner in which the knight addressed to him the following commands :

“ Good Master Upton, disencumber yourself of that salver, and then, in pity, remove yon violet-coloured suit ; (pointing to one that lay on a chair near him, and which he had worn twice,) it may do very well for you to appear amiable in the eyes of pretty Mistress Agnes when she comes ; but it is unworthy the honour of longer being about my person. Dost not think so, my worthy friend ? ”

The gentleman in waiting instantly removed the obnoxious garment, but was utterly unable to reply to his master's

interrogation. Out of its fulness the *heart may* speak, but the *head* never can; and Master Upton's was at this moment so full of surprise, (not altogether devoid of fear,) that his very tongue refused to do its office, which, in general, it performed with an unremitting zeal that gave a paradoxical but positive refutation to that proverb which falsely asserts "Idleness to be the root of all evil." Not a soul at Whitehall, from the maids of honour down to their abigails, and even their dogs, but could have averred that, had Master Upton's vocal organs sometimes remained *idle*, less evil would have occurred in that portion of his majesty's dominions. Sedley was aware of this, and had too much policy, not to reward, as they deserved, talents which had served him so well in injuring others, and which he was so competent to appreciate.

One leg of the pheasant had disappeared — two or three cups of the chambertin

had for ever bid farewell to the flask; Sir Charles Sedley had leant back in his chair—had condescendingly taken his right foot by the hand, (the left hand we should say; for precision, when things are driven to extremities, is important,) and caressed his chin-tuft some three or four times, when he again (as if for want of something better to do,) addressed his valet —

“Upton, you sometimes go to the Duke of Ormond’s, do you not?”

“Ay truly, Sir; but often as I’ve been, strange to say, by night or day, (beg pardon, didn’t mean to rhyme,) I have never caught even the most distant view of Miss Hamilton’s waiting-wench,” subjoined Master Upton, with the promptness of alarm, as a surmise darted across him that he was to be made Mercury in some embassy to the fair Elizabeth; and exclusive of his not being over ambitious of the species of glory which generally attended those sort of missions, he had of

late entered into a *liason* with Monsieur Termes, the Chevalier de Gramont's *premier gentilhomme* ; had won divers broad pieces from him at sundry times, at a *salon bourgeois* in Spring Garden, (which, from being much frequented by *gentlemen* of their class, who gambled away their own and their masters' money, had, among the lacqueys at Whitehall, obtained the name of the 'Valets' Den,') and having done so, he felt assured that Termes would act the part of the most faithful of servants by his master, should he discover his *cher ami* Up-ton to be a party concerned in any designs upon Miss Hamilton. No wonder, then, that a cold shudder succeeded these reflections, as he already experienced by anticipation the not only *coups de baton* of Termes, but even the *coups de pied* of the chevalier himself.

Meanwhile, his master's eyes were withdrawn from him, and were making the tour of the apartment, as if in search of some given point to fix on. At length

they returned to the place from whence they had set out, namely, Master Upton's anxious, order-waiting face, whose last words he repeated in a measured, abstracted tone.

"Miss Hamilton's waiting-wench — no. But do you ever (he continued, stooping to adjust the rosette of his shoe,) hear them say any thing about Lord Ossory, or when he's expected home?—eh."

"Oh, dear, yes, Sir," said Master Upton, considerably reassured, and with a simper at his own logic, "but he's *not* expected, for he's come."

"Ha!—come, say you?" cried Sedley, grasping Upton's doublet with rather more fervour than that personage liked, for it caused him to relapse into his recent tremor.

"Come, but how? when? tell me, tell me all, good Upton, and quickly."

"Surely, Sir, surely;" and the valet smoothed his ruffled doublet; and, on the strength of "*Good Upton,*" felt and

looked with the assurance and self-importance of a prime minister in critical times, when, however, he feels the game to be in his own hands.

“Why, Sir, an’t please you, he’s been here this week back; he even supped some eight nights ago at the Duke of Buckingham’s; (this, however, is a marvellously deep secret, as they do say, he went to France, to do some sly-bidding of the king’s;) but *Monsieur Challon*, the Duke of Buck’s *maître de cuisine* with whom I hold acquaintanceship, had a letter ten days ago from Monsieur Termes, the Chevalier de Gramont’s servitor, who was then in France, and who knew the Prince de Condé’s valet, who knew the Marquis de Balzac’s, who knew my Lord Ossory’s, who” —

“Truce to thy prate, sirrah, dost never mean to have done with thy catalogue of who knew’s? *I know* nothing, yet, for all thou hast been palavering this hour, and I want to know when this lordling

arrived ; and, above all, if he be now in London ? and see that thou tell me this briefly, without any histories or genealogies."

" Well, well, well," resumed Master Upton, who feeling his importance, in possessing a piece of knowledge his master wished to obtain, and being always an advocate for retributive justice in the *second* person, or in other words, for tormenting his tormentor, *à son tour*, let his words limp out like a lame cart-horse ; " well, Sir, but I was on the point of stating the fact of his having supped with my Lord Duke, some"—

" How now, knave, again at your endless beginnings ; once, for all, is Lord Ossory in London, or not ?"

" Softly, softly, Sir ; by your leave ; but you frighten the best of memories away, and leave nothing but confusion in its stead ; let me see where was I ? — Oh, ay, touching my Lord of Ossory's arrival ; yes, Sir, he *is* in London ;" and

Master Upton drew up with conscious dignity, as he pronounced the emphatic sentence.

“ Art sure of this, good Upton ?”

“ As sure as that I have the honour to serve the finest gentleman in England,” replied the valet, with a bow, which, without compromising his own importance, must, he conceived, considerably enhance that of his master.

“ And if so, how doth it fall out that he was not at last night’s mask ? or that none have seen him since he came ?”

“ For that matter,” said Master Upton, assuming the tone at once of a counsellor and expounder of riddles, “ he may have his reasons, (which concerneth no man,) for not appearing at revels ; but for seeing him, he may be seen any day from ten till noon between the Mall and Spring Gardens, his usual haunts.”

“ My best cloak and doublet to thee, if thou canst aver this as a surety ?” said Sedley.

“ And I will forfeit the richest suit the king himself ever wore, or what is still more difficult, prove the fairest lady, *my* master ever wooed, a fright, if it be *not true*,” rejoined Master Upton.

Sedley folded his arms, and took two or three hasty turns up and down the room; and then, stopping opposite the window, sent a long look up the street, towards the palace, and burst into his peculiar laugh, as he was wont to do on several occasions, all equally opposite in their nature.

“ Quick, good Master Upton, do thine office; let me be dressed and out.”

“ And what suit may it please you to wear, Sir?”

“ Suit, oh! yes, ’twill suit to a miracle, suit to a nicety, and mar his suit to boot, which is worth all other suits.”

Master Upton grew alarmed for his personal safety; recollecting that it was an axiom of his honoured father’s, that with mad people, those were more mad

than they, who did not always guard against the worst; and *mad* he thought his master certainly *must* be, to let his speech run wild at such a rate; he, therefore, effected a timely, but gradual, and above all, noiseless retreat, behind one of the friendly folds of a large Indian screen; which evolution being unperceived by his master; the latter added, after a moment's pause —

“ Oh, ay; what suit I shall wear? let me see, give me my sad-coloured suit of Stewart brown, *point d'Alençon* collar, and *terre d'Egypt* hose;” and then, for the first time, missing his valiant attendant — “ Why, where, in the name of all the devils, art thou, knave?”

“ Here, Sir, here;” bowed Master Upton, emerging from his ambush, and thinking to take advantage of this lucid interval to get nearer the door, but for which inducement, he would, most probably, have resolved upon lying *perdu* the whole day.

“ Well, dost thou hear? give me my cloak and doublet of Stewart-brown, and all else that befits the suit.”

“ Ye — ye — yes, Sir ;” and one hasty stride across the room placed the handle of the door within the affrighted valet’s convulsive grasp.

“ How now, sirrah, whither so fast ?”

“ I — I — I was merely going to get you a Restoration-handkerchief ;” stammered out the intercepted Master Upton.

“ When do I ever wear two kerchiefs, varlet? and is there not one on yonder stand? Quick, my things; and stir not till I leave this.”

With reluctant and trembling hands, Master Upton now proceeded to assist his master in the putting on of the before-mentioned sad-coloured suit; which task was no sooner accomplished, than for the first time (since his attempted escape) trusting his ears with the sound of his own voice, he ventured to enquire, “ what beaver he would be pleased to wear?”

“The one with the goss-hawk’s plume which I killed at Melrose,” was the reply.

This was a day in which Master Upton was doomed to witness more wonders than one; for, when Sedley’s toilette was finished, he observed him to select from out the numerous and costly chains and trinkets that were profusely scattered on the table before him, the fragment of a chain, not peculiarly handsome in itself, (even had it been in a perfect state,) and affix it ostentatiously across his vest. It was, in fact, the relics of Lady Cordelia’s, which he now wore from other motives than those dictated by love.

“Give me some half-dozen rapiers, Master Upton, that I may choose which shall be my friend to-day.”

This faithful servitor instantly obeyed his command; and Sedley, unsheathing them each in their turn, bent the foils severally against the floor, in order to

determine which was the best-tempered steel.

“ Ah! my trusty ruby-hilt,” he exclaimed, resuming the fourth he had tried, “ thou hast never once played me false. A Turk would take thee for a Damascus blade; but I now take thee for mine own.”

Saying which he girded it on, and then concealed his very white hands within the snowy precincts of a pair of highly-perfumed, crimson-topped, white kid gloves; after which Master Upton presented him with a Restoration handkerchief, the *vade mecum* of a gallant of those times, which was composed of white fringed taffety, with a border of oak-leaves embroidered in green flox silk. This, placed in his bosom, with two ends appearing, the fascinating Sedley sallied out to inhale the morning air; not, however, unaccompanied by an elevation of the eyebrows, and a long-drawn “*Whew!*” from Master Upton, who could not re-

frain from venting his sentiments in the following soliloquy : —

“ Fool me, if there is not something in the wind more than usual this morning. I’ve half a mind to follow — yes, I will — no, I wo’n’t, though. What if he caught me? he might run me through with that said ruby-hilted rapier, by way of prelude. Yet there can be no harm in my going, if he don’t find it out ; yet he’ll assuredly break my bones if he does ; (here Master Upton placed a hand on either side for protection;) then more fool I to let him.”

After this brief review of his politico-moral code, he gave one look at the window, to see how far his master had got, and the next moment found him in the street, following him as closely as prudence would permit. They had not proceeded far, when the sky became overcast, and one of those summer showers, which come and go so suddenly, descended in torrents. Sedley took refuge

under a gateway. He never was long any where without examining his companions (if he had any); and here his attention was soon arrested by a girl, whose face was completely concealed by the large Genoese wimple that she wore, and who was carefully endeavouring to shelter two very beautiful moss-roses (which she carried in her hand, tied with a blue ribbon) from the storm.

“I think, pretty one, (said Sedley, in his low soft voice, offering to take the flowers from her,) that I might hold these for you whilst you shake the rain from your hood.”

“How do you know whether I am pretty or not, since you have not seen my face?” replied the girl pertly, without taking any notice of his proffered attention.

“The way I know it is, that nature never does things by halves—and such a pretty little foot and ankle never could belong to the owner of an ugly face. But I do not want to take any thing for granted, I

only want to see and believe ; and if I have been mistaken, I will acknowledge my error on the face of it, and cry you a thousand pardons for having accused you of being what you are not."

"As you are never likely to know what I am, you might perhaps like to know what I am not?"

"Even so, then; for knowing this, I may easily guess what you are. But what, I pray you, is it that you are not?"

"I am *not* a person to be prattled with by every Whitehall sprite that is caught in a shower of rain; nor to lend my ears to their nonsense."

"Then, believe me," said Sedley, seizing her hand, and pressing it while he spoke, in a tone of mock gratitude and devotion that infinitely amused the bystanders, "*I am not*, or ever shall be while I exist, ungrateful for this *peculiar* mark of your favour and attention to *me*."

The offended damsel raised her hand to inflict correction on the cheek of her

tormentor; in doing so she severed one of the roses from its stem, her hood fell back, and discovered a face as fresh and as pretty as the remaining flower. The current of her thoughts was changed; she stooped to pick up the fallen flower, and bursting into tears, exclaimed, "Oh, you poor beautiful rose, what shall I do—what will my lady say?"

"And whom may your lady be, my little Flora?" enquired Sedley, as he helped her to pick up the scattered leaves.

"Oh, my lady will be so vexed," said the poor girl, only thinking of the misfortune she had met with, and not minding what he said. In the meanwhile, she had put some things out of her hand on the pavement, and among others a billet, the superscription of which ran thus, in Miss Hamilton's hand-writing: "To the Lady Cordelia Trevillion."

This was quite enough for Sedley, who instantly tried to extract the history of the flowers from her pretty tire-woman, but in vain.

While the people were yet gathered round Alice, (for it was in reality she,) assisting her to collect the fragments of the rose, every leaf of which she appeared to secure with the greatest care, a boy came up, swinging a large blue, empty bag with one hand, and throwing a stick for a little dog to run after, with the other.

"By your leave, good people, by your leave, Sirs," said he, trying to wade through the crowd.

"Oh, pray Sir, good Sir," cried Alice, arresting his foot with her hand, "do not tread on these leaves; do not, pray, go on till I have picked them up."

The boy made no other answer than by slinging his bag across his shoulder, kneeling down, and becoming another of Alice's assistants. He had no sooner done so than their eyes met, and an exclamation burst from each.

"Is it you, Mistress Alice?"

"Is it you, Master Eden?"

After each had mutually assured the

other of their own identity, Alice, with many fresh tears and lamentations, gave Eden Green the history of the scattered rose.

“Well, well, Mistress Alice,” said he, when she ceased speaking, “it were hard if I could not get you two equally pretty roses in all London.”

“Ah, I’m afraid not,” said Alice, “for you don’t know where these came from.”

“And may I ask where they *did* come from?”

“From José Corvo, the Queen’s Jew perfumer, who buys up all the choice flowers within twenty miles of London,” said Alice, looking round, and lowering her voice, “and I don’t even know where he lives; and if I did, it would be no use, for he will only sell his flowers to certain people.”

“And is it so sure,” said Eden Green, looking at her with an air of tender reproach, as if piqued at her doubting the

possibility of his doing any thing for her, "is it so sure that *I* do not know where he lives, and that he would not sell *me* a rose?"

"Oh, I know, Master Eden, that you are very clever ; and what is better, very obliging and—"

"Well, then," said Eden, "if you think so, perhaps, Mistress Alice, you would trust yourself with me as far as the Jew's house ; at least we had better get out of this crowd," he added, helping her to conceal her pretty face under her hood, "had we not?"

"Oh, surely, surely, Master Eden ;" and Alice turned round to thank the people who had helped her to pick up the rose-leaves. The rain was over, and they now dispersed.

Not so Sedley, who resolved upon following Alice and Eden Green to the Jew's house, (which was situated at no great distance, within a court in the Strand,) with the intention of reap-

ing more information respecting the flowers, from their conversation as they went ; and so occupied were they with themselves, that they did not perceive that his were the footsteps whose echo they heard constantly behind them.

“ I hope,” said Alice, when they had reached the end of Charing-Cross, opposite Sedley’s house, that led into the Strand, “ I hope José Corvo does not live *very* far off, for the rain has already kept me out longer by an hour than I should have been.”

“ Five minutes more, and we shall be in his warehouse,” replied her companion ; “ but, Mistress Alice, if the question be not unseemly, may I ask how it comes that you set such a high value on those particular flowers ?” And Master Eden opened and shut his bag while he spoke, with as much avidity as if life and death depended on that occupation.

“ Oh dear yes,” said Alice, “ the flowers were not mine, or I should not

have thought so much of them; but this morning my Lady sent me (as she often does) with a message to Miss Hamilton; well, she had been up last night so late, that I was shown into her dressing-room, which she had not yet left; and there sat on a couch reading, a very handsome, but sad looking young gentleman, who, when he looked up, I saw to be her cousin Lord Ossory. While Miss Hamilton was writing an answer to my Lady's message, a page brought in a large bunch of moss roses, (all as beautiful as this, and the one I broke,) and he said they came from José Corvo's, on the part of the Chevalier de Gramont, to Miss Hamilton; she kissed them, and called them, '*des amours*,' which, no doubt, is the French name for moss roses, for the Chevalier is French, you know, Master Eden." Master Eden bowed and smiled, and Alice proceeded. "She then put them in water herself, and said to the Lord Ossory,

‘Cousin, I will be very generous, and let you send two of my prettiest roses to the prettiest lady in the world.’ ‘Not till I know,’ said he, smiling, ‘whether we should bestow the same epithet on the same person.’ ‘I am afraid we should not,’ said Miss Hamilton, ‘for no doubt *you* would not think pretty, half pretty enough; but this will decide the matter,’ and she showed him what she had written; when he saw who it was to, he coloured very much, and said, ‘Nonsense, Elizabeth, you are so silly.’ ‘Why, you know,’ cried Miss Hamilton, laughing, ‘we have always been reckoned like, but I never knew till now, in *what* the resemblance consisted; but if you have so little gallantry in you, as positively to refuse sending these flowers, I’ll first forge a most tender billet in your name, to the lady in question, and then get little Stewart to use all her influence with the king to have you banished from Whitehall, as a person whose

Cato-like propensities (whatever she meant by that) render you a disgrace to his court.' He then laughed in his turn, and, taking two of the very best roses, he tied them very carefully up with this blue ribbon, and put them into my hand without saying a word; but Miss Hamilton said to me, 'Be sure, Alice, you do not tell Lady Cordelia what difficulty I had to make him send her these flowers, or she will be too proud to accept them.' Well, if you'll believe me, at the mention of my lady's name, he darted out of the room, as if she had been somebody he disliked, instead of ———; but that's neither here nor there; and now all I have to tell is, that five minutes after I left the Duke of Ormond's, on my way home, I was caught in that nasty shower (plague on it), and was obliged to take shelter under a gateway, more to save the roses than myself, when who should be there, but that wicked, smooth-tongued Sir Charles

Sedley," (Sedley bowed low behind Alice for the compliment,) "who did not guess I knew him, and so began tormenting me; and it was in raising my hand to reward his impertinence, that I was unfortunate enough to break the stem of that beautiful rose; and, even now, though you are good enough to promise me another like it, I cannot but grieve sorely; for, after all, it will not be *that* rose; and my lady will be so vexed, for you know Master Eden, one does so prize even a flower given by those we love" — (here Alice's beauty deepened into a blush, and Master Eden breathed his spirit through a sigh) — "and I'm sure my lady *does* love Lord Ossory."

This was said in a much lower voice than she had hitherto spoken in, but not low enough to escape Sedley's quick ear, who ground his teeth, and grasped his sword as he muttered, "*does* she?"

"How I hate this nasty Strand," said Alice, "it always reminds me of the

day we went to that wicked astrologer's in Tower-street, when my lady was so ill, and I was so frightened."

"And pray, Mistress Alice," enquired her companion, "may I ask what it was that frightened you?"

"Oh such a monster, I'm sure you'd have been frightened too, had you seen him, the ugliest and most deformed dwarf you can imagine; but what frightened me so, Master Eden, was, that when I turned to look at him a second time, his face was so handsome, and exactly like yours."

"I am sorry," said Eden Green, with a suppressed smile, "that any thing like me should have had the unhappiness to frighten you, mistress Alice."

"Oh no! not *because* it was like *you*," rejoined the damsel, "but because it showed that that wicked astrologer must have dealings with the old gentleman, to be able to make black appear white in that way."

The page was about to reply, when he found they had arrived at Craven-court, the residence of José Corvo, a place then situated nearly in the same spot where the street of that name now stands. It was a large, dark, gloomy looking square, inhabited solely by Jews and merchants trading to the Levant. Every house was a warehouse, before which appeared bales of goods and merchandize of every description, but the one occupied by Corvo differed from the rest in the magnitude of its size, and its external appearance of opulence. Notwithstanding it was a fine sunny morning, a lamp burnt over the entrance, nor was it by any means a superfluous appendage. But before we follow Alice and her friend Eden Green into the Jew's presence, we will give a short description of him and his house, which are both worthy of another chapter.

CHAP. VI.

IN the merry days of our Second Charles the Jews were a people held in great repute; or, in other words, (not to trench upon historical authority,) a race, of whose services the gallant cavaliers of the time stood often, and greatly in need. The "wise men of the east" were they commonly called, though it must be owned they were most impartial in their emigration, flocking from north, south, east, and west, and making the good city of London their rallying point; to sojourn in any other place was, in their opinion, like calculating time on Ahaz king of Judah's dial, upon which the sun is said to have gone back fifteen degrees; but in the polished era which succeeded the Restoration, knavery itself wore a court dress, and vice hid

its cloven foot within one of Marot's* well turned red-heeled shoes. The very Israelites understood how to beggar a person with a degree of grace and high bearing that left him nothing—to complain of in mortgaging his last acre; in short, to sum up every thing in one great and beautiful climax, *draining* in those days was effected *without dunning*! People were ruined just as well, and as soon; but the mechanism of the machinery that was to occasion their downfall, was not daily and hourly obtruded on their vision, but, alas! for our degenerate times, the art of cheating politely, and the art of painting on glass, are alike lost; arts lavished on such equally brittle materials, that no wonder they should both have perished with the past, and left nothing but their fame to posterity. Among the sons of Levi,

* A Frenchman, shoemaker to the court of Charles, and celebrated for the peculiar beauty of his square-toed shoes.

who practised the polite art in the year 1665, José Corvo stood pre-eminent; not from any intrinsic merit of his own, such as possessing more craft, more capital, or less conscience than his brethren, but from the circumstance of his having left the citron groves and spicy gales of Portugal, in the suite of Queen Catherine, to have the honour of becoming her majesty's perfumer in London; though why called simply "*perfumer*" is rather enigmatical, as *that* title *alone* is quite inadequate to convey an idea of the variety of his wares, or the multitude of his avocations. Every thing that necessity could want, or whim imagine, Corvo could supply; his riches increased daily, yet never was he known to importune his customers, from the highest to the lowest, for payment. On the contrary, a stranger would have imagined he was a philanthropist, who maintained at his own expense a vast bazaar (the focus of earth's treasures,) for the convenience of

his fellow-creatures; notwithstanding this, it was computed that on the article of apricot paste alone, he made cent. per cent. At his warehouse were to be found the productions of every quarter of the globe; agates from the river Achates, pearls from Balsora, and diamonds from Golconda; here were piled the spices of Molucca, and the amulets of Arabia Felix; there, breathed from gilded glass the Gulatter of the Persian rose; while around bloomed flowers from the fairest gardens in England. Nor was he alone mindful of what might afford pleasure; talismans, and antidotes, had he of all descriptions, from the simplest herb to the far-famed water of the fountain Acidalus, in Campania, which is said to restore even the blind to sight. Was it then to be wondered at that Corvo should rank among, not only the magnates of his tribe, but of the land? Since whether it were to supply the diadem of the capricious monarch with new

jewels ; his favourites with auxiliaries to beauty ; his courtiers with money ; or Nell Gwynne's children with rattles and sweet-meats, he was always equally prompt, and equally indispensable. He was, moreover, a politician ; imported state secrets, with gloves, from France ; pipes from Germany ; furs from Russia ; wines from Spain ; and pistachio comfits from Italy. It is true, that this was a species of merchandize which required the exchange to be made in kind ; but which of the courtiers was there, whose discretion preponderated, when weighed in the balance against personal advantage or self-interest ? And even those who held the highest repute for reserve, in matters of a political nature, were not proof against the culinary perfection, and lavish hospitality of the Jew's suppers ; it was at these almost nightly banquets, that Corvo contrived to possess himself of every piece of state news, necessary to the success of his diplomatic

traffic, and the deepest secrets were soon extracted from the sagest heads ; filtered from all disguise, through wines of the most choice vintage, from every part of the globe, that could be cited as the birth-place of a single grape. Nor was it on the excellence of his cellar alone that he relied for initiating himself into the fate of nations ; Corvo had a daughter, one of those bright beings of the south, all light and bloom, like the sun, and flowers that shone and breathed over her own fair country ; large dark eyes had she, within whose depths the diamond sparkles seemed only flashing to illumine their dove-like softness ; a clear high forehead, rivalling Parian marble in its whiteness, as contrasted with the cloud of raven hair that shaded it ; a cheek, whose hues so changed, that none might determine which tint to call peculiarly its own ; a mouth, whose lips just parted like an opening rose-bud, displaying, like the flower, the matchless beau-

ties it contained within ; to this face was joined a figure that might have enriched sculpture, and defied criticism ; no wonder then, that on occasions where Corvo's money, and even wine failed, the pretty Maraquita had only to lend her countenance in order to succeed.

Among honest* José's acquirements, that of speaking English fluently was to be ranked. By "fluently," as it is here applied, we mean to his own perfect satisfaction and that of his auditors, who always understood his "*Yesh, fore Gosh, I vill lant you de monish,*" to imply that he would accede to their request ; or his favourite benevolent simile of "*Yesh, yesh, I am goot to help de lame dogsh over de shtyles,*" to mean that he would extricate them from the difficulty, (of whatever nature it might

* Every body is aware, that Hebrew is always read backwards. In like manner is the word "*honest,*" when applied to a Jew, to be interpreted — *i. e. vice versa.*

chance to be,) that they were then entangled in.

To describe his shop or wareroom is not quite so easy a task, as it bore little resemblance to either, being a large saloon entirely lined with looking-glass, which reflected back the multifarious treasures it contained. The drapery (of which there was a profusion) was entirely composed of cashmere and Persian shawls, with other ladies' gear, which, as it disappeared, was instantly replaced. The floor was covered with Turkish carpets, and round the apartment ran a counter of ebony, inlaid with flowers of mother-of-pearl. Behind this counter, at the upper end of this immense room, sat, (like the presiding goddess of a modern French café,) the pretty Maraquita, whose empire extended over flowers, perfumes, trinkets, gloves, ribbons, and sweetmeats of every description. She was not, it is true, as good a linguist as her sire; no tongue knew she but her

native Portuguese; but she had eyes that spoke all languages, and she contrived to retail her father's wares to the full as advantageously (if not more so) than himself. She retained the ancient costume of her tribe, which was more in keeping with her style of beauty than any modern dress she could have adopted; her apparel, in its way, being always of the most costly materials.

Corvo himself undertook the more arduous department of lending money, vending shawls, disseminating coffee, and *hinting* at Tokay, which, in those days, was a contraband rarity. For this purpose, he generally took his station at the opposite extremity of the room, and there, in a long brocade garment, made after the Eastern fashion, a purple shawl round his waist, in guise of girdle, a sort of Armenian cap on his head, a long German pipe in his mouth, a beard which in length rivalled Aaron's, and a pair of embroidered yellow slippers, he sat on a

large three-cornered stool, with a low back to it, his arms folded, and leaning lazily on the counter, while he whiffed his pipe in the face of those who either came to purchase his wares, borrow money, or retail news, seldom condescending to rise, or alter his posture in the smallest degree, on the entrance of any customer whatsoever. And thus was he seated, and so was he employed, on the morning that Eden Green conducted Alice to his abode.

On arriving at his house, Sedley had taken advantage of the darkness of the passage to remain *perdu*, till he saw Alice and her companion come out ; and they, little dreaming that they were so watched, walked quietly on to the end of the passage, when Master Eden opened a door, which conducted them into Corvo's emporium of fancy and finery.

"The first of the morning to you, Senor Corvo," said the page, and was about to pass on, in order to woo the

pretty Maraquita out of a rose ; when the Jew actually took the pipe out of his mouth, and laid the end of it on Eden Green's shoulder, exclaiming,

“ Shtop, shtop, Mashter Paradishe, for vat you passh me sho quickly dish mornings? have you no biddings for me from de goot lord your mashters?”

“ None, Senor Corvo, an it please you ;” and again Master Eden made an attempt to proceed with his fair companion. But Senor Corvo was in a loquacious mood, and it might not be.

“ Vell, vell,” recommenced Corvo, pointing with his pipe to Alice, “ but vat pretty pieche of merchandize have you got dere? ish it your own, or your mashter's?”

“ Mark me, you old sinner,” cried the indignant page, expanding almost into a giant as he spoke, “ it's a pity but you knew yourself as well as *I* know you ; and then, perhaps, for very shame you might be more sparing of your jibes.”

Whatever retort this speech might have elicited from the Jew, was warded off by the entrance of a lady, who was laughing (*rather* loudly for a *lady*) at the antics of a little boy about four years old, who was running before her, and she appeared quite out of breath in running after him.

“ Ah !” cried Corvo, laying down his pipe, and stretching out his arms to the child, who scrambled up the counter, and got into them. “ Ah, Mishtress Gwynne ! I might have known you vash abroad dish morning de day be sho bright. I no ashk you *how* you do, for I shee you have shtolen all de roshes in my shop to put in your cheeks ; but *vat* can I have de pleasure to do for you to-day ?”

“ Oh, nothing for me,” said the breathless beauty, flinging herself into a seat ; “ but Charley there has been so rebellious this morning, and so over free with his prattle, that I had no escape but to

bring him here, for you to stop his mouth with comfits."

"And sho I vill, my littel king," said Corvo, kissing the child; "and it vere hard if now that you have been tree daysh a dukesh, you should not have de besht shweetmeatsh of any littel dukesh in de world."

Here his little Grace of St. Alban's burst into a most joyous laugh, (in which his mamma joined,) clapped his little hands, and then the Jew's face, somewhat more earnestly than the Senor Corvo either desired or deserved — at least from him. When the ducal pain had a little abated in his Mosaic cheeks, he again addressed Nell Gwynne.

"I tinksh, Mishtressh Gwynne, von littel cupsh of *Vervina* would be no bad tingsh for you after valking; and Mash-ter Paradishe," as he always called Eden Green, who now was busily employed at the other end of the room, selecting two of Maraquita's best roses, "and

Mashter Paradishe there yander can tell you it ish goot, goot, de besht in de world, do he doesh call me namesh, and it ish no goot to call namesh, ish it Mish-tressh Gwynne?"

"I don't know," said Nell Gwynne, smiling, and looking almost involuntarily at her son.

"Ah yesh, yesh, it be goot to call de namesh sometimesh, ven de namesh *be true*, vidout you call dish little king here the namesh, he no have de titlesh,* but for Master Paradishe, dere be no such luck in de namesh he call me."

"And pray, Senor Corvo, what names does he call you?"

"Vat namesh he callsh me? it vash only dish morningsh he call me an old skinner."

* Honest José, no doubt, alluded to the well known circumstance of Nell Gwynne's having called her son, in a pet, a little b—g—d; for which the king reproving her, she replied, "Well, I have no other name for him." The next day the child was created Duke of St. Alban's.

"I marvel then at your saying, Senor José, that there is no luck in his names."

"Vat you mean Mishtresh Gwynne, I no quite undershtand you?"

"Why you said just now," said Nell, with her wicked smile, "that names were good when they were true?"

"Ha! ha! Mishtresh Gwynne, I shee how it ish, you get up early to beguile kingsh vid your swheet fache, and banter poor Jewsh vid your sawchy wordsh."

"But where are my *tomfits*? *dive* me my *soogar pumbs*, or me 'll tell the king of oo, and he shall kill oo," screamed the little duke; and he enforced his threat with a few more blows on Corvo's cheek.

"Now fie, fie, Charley," cried his mother, lifting him from the counter, and placing him on the ground, "fie for a marred urchin as you are, I take shame for you."

"That you might have done long ago,

had you been so inclined," said Master Eden, *en passant*, as he left the shop with Alice, who looked as happy as Maraquita herself, and as blooming as the two roses she had given her. The Duke of St. Alban's, thus chastised, now set up a howl, that provoked his mamma to exclaim,

"I know who'll tell the king now, and then we'll see who'll be let to have any more comfits."

The child was awed at his mother's *daring* to threaten him, and staring at her for a minute or two, sobbed away his tears, and then turning on his heel, set off at full speed to the other end of the room, where he took possession of a large bunch of Maraquita's flowers, with which he strewed the floor in his return up the room, till his attention was arrested by some point collars, when he instantly flung down the stalks of the flowers, in order to equip himself in one of them, which he was so amused at

finding descended below his waist, that he ran back to his mother, laughing as violently as he had been crying the minute before, and telling her to see how funny he looked.

"Yes, yes, Charley, but now take it off, for we must be going." And she tried, as she spoke, to disencumber him of his finery; upon which the little duke again shed a torrent of tears, struggled to free himself from his mamma's hands, vociferating that he would keep the collar, and no one should take it from him.

"But why, Charley, child," urged his mother, "man's gear looks senseless on an urchin of your inches, and such shoulder tire as that is only fit for big men."

But Jerman, *Cesterfield*, and Kill-a-geese (as he always called Killigrew) are not big men, and dey wear 'em, and so will me."

"Out upon you for an unruly brat," cried Nell Gwynne rising, and trying to

remove the collar forcibly from his neck, "but you are your father's echo, that never wants a wise reason for a foolish action; but I'd make you preach to another text an I had you beyond the reach of all your spoilers;" saying which, the gentle Nell bestowed on her son one of those gifts generally known by the name of "a box on the ear," and flinging her wimple somewhat abruptly on the carpet, flung *herself* as abruptly into a chair, leant back, fanned herself violently, stretched out her pretty little feet till they were almost in a horizontal position, and so contrived to display two critically well-turned ancles under the auspices of a pair of rose-coloured stockings.

"Oh, Mishtressh Gwynne, you take von littel cup of *Kervina*, it be of de goot to you; and you shall have it in von of de littel golt tulip cups dat my goot Lord Rochester have had made for to trink de Tokay."

“No, no, not *Vervina*; Canary is more to my taste, Senor Corvo.”

“Vell, vell, vid all my heart, vat you vill.”

And honest José commanded one of his attendants to bring it and some fruit—a mandate which was instantly obeyed.

“Now,” said he, filling a cup from a silver-wire flask, and presenting it to the nymph, who had again hung her fan round her left wrist, and extended her ungloved right hand to receive the wine; “now, if you do not shay dat the king even hash no Canary dat could passh for the broder to dish, I vill be content to trink vatersh and eat hamsh for de resht of my lifesh.”

At the mention of these two things that he abominated equally, Corvo laughed long and loud. The last peal of this laugh had died away, the lady had raised the cup to her lips, when the door opened, and Sedley entered. No sooner had he made his

appearance than she replaced the untasted cup on the salver, and the Jew dismissed his smile, and resumed his pipe, which was, with him, resuming his dignity—an appendage he made it a point of never dispensing with, in the presence of any of his male customers; for though he was no niggard of his patronage and friendship to the king, and even the nobles, yet his faith *just* extended as far as the doctrine of *possibilities*, and therefore he felt that “Familiarity” *might* “breed contempt,” and so wisely resolved, in all audiences, whether private or public, to avert freedom and eschew condescension with his superiors; however he might deign to be facetious with his inferiors, towards his equals his bearing was a specimen of the happy medium, savouring not more of the one than of the other, but partaking equally of both.

Sedley, however, belonging to the first-mentioned class, Corvo, on his entrance, resumed (as we have before stated,) his pipe, or we might say his

sceptre, re-seated himself on his stool, flinging his right arm over the back of it, while his yellow-slipped right foot reposed on the counter, which position caused his head to be rather averted; while his left shoulder, as well as the whiffs of his pipe, were in a direct line with Nell Gwynne's face. This attitude had the two-fold advantage of contributing to the worthy Senor's comfort, and at the same time doing away with any appearance he might have otherwise had of degenerating into attention towards his companion, who on her side had also some arrangements to make on the entrance of Sedley — such as disappointing the wine, by not allowing it to pass the ruby boundaries to which it had the moment before been raised; again putting her fan in commission, and drawing her mask from her pocket, and holding it before her face, so as neither quite to see or be seen.

Sedley, affecting not to notice the

commotion his appearance had excited, approached leisurely at his usual loitering pace, adjusted his hair in a mirror as he passed, looked perfectly satisfied with his performance, saluted the Jew with a bow of the most profound respect, made a mock lunge at the Duke of St. Alban's with his ruby-hilted rapier, and then executed a graceful start, with a piano burst of pleasure and surprise at the sight of his mother, as though he had not perceived her till then, and considered it something wonderful his perceiving her at all.

“So early! and yet the sun risen!—the flowers awake, and the light of the world abroad, by mine honour, but 'tis the fairest wonder these eyes ever beheld,” he exclaimed, bowing his essenced hair so low, that the chesnut curls almost kissed the rose-coloured hose of Nell Gwynne.

“Nay, now,” cried Nell, letting her words melt into a lisp, as was her wont

when she wished to be patrician, “me, thinks the *wonder* is, that *you* should be stirring while the day is yet so young; that the very air is *all* common, unredeemed by one gentle breath; so that a polite camelion might well sicken at such coarse food, or fast till he got better, and yet you can venture to inhale it.”

“Call you it unredeemed by *one* gentle breath, when you have just enriched it with words that might well be mistaken for whispers of the sweet south, or the sigh of flowers when the air has wooed them?” said Sedley.

A laugh, a shrug of the shoulders, and a tap of her fan on Sedley’s arm, was the lady’s only reply. She then rose to depart, as she drew her cloak and hood about her.

The Jew, without deigning to take the pipe from his mouth, or turn his head, said, “Vell, but Mishtressh Gwynne, you vill tashte my vinesh before you go?”

Saying which, he again offered her the

cup he had previously filled out, but she rejected it with an "Oh, fie! Senor Corvo, not of a morning;" and wishing him a good day, took her son's hand, nodded to Sedley, and withdrew: he measuring her with his eye till she shut the door, and the Jew, when she had shut it, repeating, "Oh fie, Senor Corvo, not of a morning. Ha, ha, ha! dat be goot."

Sedley now walked to the other end of the room; and after having spent half an hour in saying the sweetest things he could imagine, in the best Portuguese he was master of, to the pretty Maraquita, he entreated her to give him two moss-roses, that he at least might wear her emblem.

She gave them, and the blush that dyed her cheek as she did so, was deeper than the tint on the flowers.

He then said she must give him some blue ribbon to tie them with, as that colour was the symbol of constancy. He took care to arrange the flowers and the

ribbon precisely in the same manner as those which he had seen with Alice ; and placing them in his bosom, with innumerable protestations of admiration, vows of everlasting love, soft sighs, and tender glances, he breathed the most passionate adieus to the beautiful Jewess, and left her to pursue his way to the Mall ; a scornful bitterness curling his proud lip, and a malicious triumph sparkling in his eye, as though he had already drained the cup of vengeance to the dregs.

CHAP. VII.

SEDLEY pursued his way to the Mall, with that velocity of pace common to persons labouring under any species of mental excitement; by the unhappy it is adopted, as if they thought it would enable them to walk away from themselves; by the joyous, as if to reach the goal of some expected pleasure the sooner; to those whose aim is vengeance, (as with Sedley,) it is the lightning with which a vulture darts upon its prey: with the speed he used, a few minutes sufficed to convey him from the Jew's house, and the gloomy court it was enclosed in, to the fresh Green Park, its bright sun, and its gay groups of courtiers, who were, with their joyous monarch, inhaling as much of the morning air as they deemed necessary to insure justice being

done to; their noon-day repast. Sedley had his own reasons for not joining them as usual; but at once directing his steps to a thickly shaded and unfrequented walk, became the solitary occupant of it; it was not, however, so remote but that he had the full benefit of seeing and hearing all that occurred. “Ha, old Rowly, so you have got the two paragons with you; each equally laudable in their different way, and consequently worthy of *your* favour; the one, the most accomplished scape-grace of his time, (always, my liege, as in duty bound, excepting your most gracious self,) the other, homered forsooth among the swinish multitude, who are, no doubt, the fitting judges of such mettle — the *most finished gentleman* of the time! but we’ll see if we cannot send some of his gentle blood into the thirsty ground — that the roots of these goodly oaks drinking of the purple stream may quaff such draughts of loyalty as shall send them

flourishing down to posterity, till every leaf becomes the herald of our *glorious* reign!" Such was Sedley's soliloquy, accompanied by his usual bitter laugh, as he descried the king at a short distance; his cloak thrown back; his hands behind him, and a smile on his countenance, as he appeared to divide his attention equally between Rochester on his right and Lord Ossory on his left; at length he stopped, and laughed immoderately at something that Rochester had said; and then, turning to Lord Ossory, held him by the collar of his cloak, and seemed to be interrogating him very earnestly about something.

"Ho! is it so?" said Sedley, "this will never do."

Saying which he left his retreat, and swinging the before-mentioned Restoration hankerchief in one hand, doffed his beaver with the other, as he hastily passed the king to join Miss Jennings and Miss Blague, whom he saw walking

at some distance. This manœuvre had the desired effect. The king, who otherwise would not have cared to have spoken to him, had his curiosity excited by the hurry Sedley appeared to be in; and again stopping, and looking after him, said to his companions : —

“ How now, my lords? Sir Charles Sedley seems in the mind this morning to make his presence as scarce as thy good behaviour, Rochester.”

“ Ay, truly, Sire,” replied the earl, “ and, perchance, for the same reason — that it is not over acceptable to your majesty.”

“ Well, well,” said the king, “ we will own, that thy bad behaviour has brought us much diversion, but remember, John, if this poor knight, this Sir Ambrose Templeton, should lay his death at thy door, it will be a mortal sin.”

“ I thought,” cried Rochester, “ your

majesty was for giving even the devil his due?"

"True, true, and therefore it is why I have given *thee* to him so often, Rochester."

The earl, for once in his life, had the good policy to bow, without uttering the retort which hovered on his lips — and the monarch continued : —

"But what can give such unusual speed to Sir Charles Sedley's movements? We would speak with him, but that he is now out of hearing."

"Nay, for that matter, he is easily recalled, if it is your majesty's pleasure that I should bear him a message to that effect?" said Rochester.

"Why no ; we would not thou shouldst go," said the king, "for considering how eager thou wert to anger him last night, not lacking courtesy, he might be equally prompt to repay thee this morning ; but my Lord of Ossory (who

is wont to make his zeal out-strip our wishes,) could do our bidding?"

Lord Ossory bowed, and withdrew in search of Sedley, who had now joined the two ladies; he had to make nearly the tour of the park before he could overtake them; and when he did, he had some difficulty in making either of the two recognise him, so amused did they appear with their own conversation; at length, the pretty Jennings greeted him with her laughing blue eyes; and after she had given him, and he had listened to, and promised to deliver a long message to Miss Hamilton; he conveyed the king's commands to Sedley.

"Alas! he little dreams," said the latter, "of the sacrifice I make in obeying him; but now," he continued, taking Miss Jennings's hand, and pressing it to his heart, while he bowed to Miss Blague, "let who will doubt my loyalty, for I have proved it to the utmost."

Saying which he walked away with

Lord Ossory, who was not long in perceiving the chain and roses with which he was decorated. "Can it be," thought he, "that Cordelia, even if she cares not for me, which she has but too well proved, would give *my* gifts to *him*? She need not trample on me, though she spurns me; yet, it was but last night, and I could have sworn she loved me; but women are so — what then, if her whole sex are false, *she is not; she cannot* be. 'Twere doubting heaven to suspect her — but then, again, these are the very flowers on which, not two hours since, I breathed out my very soul, and sent her. That chain, too — oh, she *did* love *me* when I gave her *that* — no, no, it cannot be — Sedley is a villain, who has wiles that would encompass earth — reach to heaven, and draw it down to hell."

"Sir Charles Sedley," said he, making a full stop opposite his companion; his brain maddening, his eye flashing, and his lip quivering as he spoke, "when

you have known the king's pleasure *I* would speak with you?"

"Loyally spoken," replied Sedley; "it is but meet that I should lend mine ear to our liege lord the king first, and after he has filled it as he listeth, I know no one whose service it will be more at than my Lord of Ossory's, especially when we have so long had to lament his absence."

"Doubtless it *must* have aggrieved *Sir Charles Sedley* much."

"Yes truly, for I would not miss the fashion," said Sedley, with his cold, taunting smile.

"I have not now time to compliment you on the adoption of it," said the young earl, with a bow as cold and ironical as Sedley's smile, "for the king is close at hand; but when he shall have satisfied his claims on your attention, I shall be happy to acknowledge this, with *some other obligations*."

"Nay, unless obligations be born of

fancy, my lord, *you owe me* none," replied Sedley.

"The true test of generosity, to forget one's own deeds," said the earl, biting his lip as he stepped back, while Sedley bowed to the king, whom they had now come up with, and who was busily employed explaining to Rochester, and tracing in the gravel with the point of his sword, the plan of a new theatre.

"A fair morning, and well met, or rather well caught, Sir Charles Sedley," said he, desisting from his occupation, "for you passed us anon with the speed of a lapwing."

"And it should seem," interposed Rochester, who never could resist an opportunity of saying any thing which he thought would disconcert Sedley, and glancing at the relics of Lady Cordelia's chain as he spoke, "that his expedition was equally subterranean, though not for water, but ore."

"Nay," said the king, "*you*, my lord, might have remembered that the sylphs do not use him so ill, that he should be compelled to fly to the gnomes to forge his chains."

"Alas! Sire," said Sedley with a bow and a shrug, "the saying runs that '*wits have short memories*,' and it must be true; for did not your majesty belong to the order, you would doubtless have remembered it."

"Nathless," replied Charles; "*Lingua mali pars pessima servi*, and why remember its offences?"

"Truly," said Rochester, "but that is spoken with wisdom, and worthy your majesty's all-gracious self."

"Except," rejoined the king, "when a goose taketh a goose's quill to perpetuate the offences of the tongue, *then* they need somewhat of punishment, if it were but for the sake of example."

"*Somewhat* of punishment, Sire!" said Rochester, bowing to the very

ground, "with all due deference to your royal judgment, it merits the *greatest, even that* of not seeing your majesty's countenance for three long months, which is like living without the sun for the same space of time. But, for *examples*," (and his voice and manner involuntarily changed as he spoke to his usual jibing tone),"——

"Doubtless, you would say," interrupted the king, "that, though *never a model*, you have *often* been an *example*."

A laugh from all present followed this speech, which was increased by Sedley's leaning forward towards Rochester, and with a mock air of great solicitude, begging he would take his place, and stand more in the shade, as he feared the *sun* might be too much for him. Whatever reply the earl might have made, was prevented by the king's turning to Sedley, from whom he was anxious to know the cause of the haste he had appeared in a short time ago, and saying —

“ But we detain you, Sir Charles Sedley, and considering the haste you seemed in just now, this is scarcely fair.”

Sedley assured him that he had no particular reason for walking so quickly, beyond the wish to overtake Miss Jennings and Miss Blague, whom he perceived at some distance.

Seeing that this answer had quite dispelled the king's curiosity, he made his congé, and passed on. Lord Ossory, whose eye had been fixed on him, or rather on the flowers and chain he wore, the whole time he was speaking to the king, was not long in following him. This, Sedley was aware of, and listened to the echo of the footsteps behind him with a fiendish joy, arising from the hope that either those or his own would soon be still for ever. When he came to the entrance of the thickly shaded walk, which he had occupied on first coming to the park, he leant against a tree, as if fatigued from the haste with which he

had walked, and then affecting surprise at seeing Lord Ossory, (who had stopped when he stopped, and who was gazing at him, as though the resentment of his looks had robbed him of speech,) bowed slightly, as if he thought the earl would pass on, and then exclaiming, like one seized with a sudden fit of remembrance, —

“ Oh true, your lordship bespoke mine ear when the king had done with it; and as I must be brief, I would know your pleasure as soon as may be.”

“ And I, Sir Charles Sedley,” replied the earl, “ would know how that chain and those flowers came into your possession? and that too, without equivocation or delay.”

“ Nay,” cried Sedley, “ produce your search warrant; tell me by what authority you demand such information, and *then*, and not till *then*, I may give it you?”

“By the authority of truth and justice,” said the earl.

“By the same authority I refuse to answer any interrogations that curiosity may dictate, and impertinence demand.”

“This is base and paltry equivocation,” muttered the earl.

“For that matter,” said Sedley, with a look of the most goading insolence, while he deliberately unfolded his arms, and took the flowers from his vest with one hand, (swinging them so as to scatter the leaves in all directions,) and twisting the chain backwards and forwards with the other—“for that matter, though the days of chivalry *be past*, I deem not so lightly of a lady’s fame as to scatter it to the winds; nor am I, albeit, so unused, or so undeserving of a lady’s favour, as to make the town crier herald forth my good fortune; *this*, my lord, may perhaps be sufficient explanation of what you are pleased to call my equivocation.”

“Base, cowardly villain,” exclaimed the earl, grasping his sword.

“Ha! say you so,” said Sedley, whose countenance assumed the look of a demon, “there is but one thing can thank you for *that* title, and it *shall* —” he added, drawing his rapier, which scarcely glittered for an instant in the air, before it passed into the side of the young earl, who sank lifeless from the loss of blood. Sedley stirred not, but stood with his eyes fixed on his victim, panting like a tiger over his prey, and was only aroused by a crowd gathering towards the spot, and Andrew Wilford among them pressing forward, and exclaiming vehemently,

“How now, my lord! — Sir, what’s this? murder, by the law! treason, by the statute! The king (God bless him!) not yet left the Mall; that his royal eyes should witness so foul a deed! that the flower of England’s nobles should lay dead, e’en in the sunshine of a summer

day — and you, Sir Charles Sedley — oh shame! — shame! — If such was your ambition, you might have come by a *bloody hand* in a less worthless way.” Here honest Andrew uttered almost a scream of horror, as he felt (which his eloquence had not allowed him to do before) the noble blood of the house of Ormond trickling on his foot from the reeking weapon Sedley still held. At this the crowd began to press more closely round the spot, and to manifest greater symptoms of abhorrence towards Sedley, who, nevertheless, did not attempt to move, till feeling his cloak violently pulled two or three times, he at length turned slowly round to discover who had taken such a liberty with him; when he perceived Master Upton (who, to do him justice, had never lost sight of his master, from the time he had left home in the morning till the present moment.)

“Fly! fly! for your life, Sir,” said he, breathless from hurry and trepida-

tion, "the king himself is hastening to the spot; he will be here on the instant, and then you are lost! — Here," he continued, drawing a key from his vest, "this will open for you the subterraneous door that leads through the Park to York Gate; once there, you are not a stone's throw from Westminster Stairs, where you have only to inquire among the bargemen for my kinsman, one Gerald Fairfax, master of the Royal Kate, and he will drop down the river with you to Gravesend in no time; and there are always plenty of smacks there, ready to slip their cables, that would run you over to France before the Lieutenant of the Tower had time to read his majesty's orders, to send his merry men in pursuit of you."

Sedley, however, did not appear inclined to profit by this friendly advice, for he remained immovable; nor did he even acknowledge it further, than by bestowing a smile on the donor, some-

what more kindly than usual. Upton had not time to reiterate his counsel, for he was carried away with the crowd, which was falling back to make way for the king, who was, as he had predicted, close at hand. On arriving at the spot, which was now literally dyed in blood, Charles gazed for a few moments with unaffected sorrow on the lifeless but beautiful form of the most accomplished young man of his day, and dashing away a tear, (which, as it fell, mingled with that blood which had ever been freely shed in the cause of the Stuarts,) himself stooped to assist in raising him.

“Mind you, my lords,” said he, when he saw the young earl placed in the hands of Lords Shaftesbury, Arlington, Chesterfield and Rochester, who had volunteered their services to convey him home, “mind ye that he be cared for at the palace, and that this sad event (which may not be altogether fatal) on no account reach the ear of our gallant

friend the Duke of Ormond, till we ourselves shall disclose it to him at a more fitting season, when God grant, we may have some good tidings to mingle with the bad. See that the leeches do their duty, and that he want for nothing—we ourselves will watch the result.”

Sedley, during this scene, remained standing, his head uncovered, his eyes fixed on the ground, and his left arm akimbo ; while his right hand still retained the blood-stained sword, the point of which rested on his foot.

When the king had watched the group which bore Lord Ossory out of sight, he turned to Sedley, and having ordered Andrew Wilford to take his sword from him, said, “ Whatever may have stirred Sir Charles Sedley to so ill a deed as the shedding of blood, almost as noble as our own, he should have chosen a fitter time and place ; but we speak not now of the disrespect evinced to ourselves, *that* is forgotten in the magnitude of our sor-

row for its consequences. But we dispense with Sir Charles Sedley's presence at Whitehall; and moreover find him apartments in our Tower of London, till it may be known what further shall befall our gallant young friend."

Saying which, he walked away towards the palace amid the acclamations of the multitude, leaving Sedley in the custody of Andrew Wilford and one of his brother pages, till a party of the king's body-guard could turn out to escort him to the Tower.

When the mob had in some degree dispersed, Master Upton protruded his head from a tree behind which he had taken refuge; and, seeing the coast clear, walked sorrowfully up to his master, and with many a piteous look and desponding shrug, said, "Ah, Sir, had you followed your poor servitor's advice, this would not have happened."

"Peace, knave," cried Sedley; "but,

no, thou meant me well, and it shall not go unrequited."

"Nay, nay," said Andrew Wilford, "bewray thy meaning as thou wilt, Master Upton, it would not have been seemly in a gentleman of Sir Charles Sedley's bearing, to have evitated his sovereign's just resentment, by fleeing like a thief in the night."

"For that matter," rejoined Master Upton, "there was no night in the case, for it was broad day-light. But I do not pretend, my *Lord Wilford*, to understand these court points as well as you; all I know is, that where there is danger (as it is never likely my head should save my heels,) I always make it a rule that my heels shall save my head; so that, albeit, unlike the rest of our texters, you see I practise what I preach."

"Ay, marry do you," said Wilford, "as far as *that* goes; but, for my part, I should dread having suitably light fingers imputed to such a light pair of heels."

Sedley, who grew impatient at the bandying of invective between these menials, was not sorry to see the guard advancing that was to conduct him to the Tower ; and merely waiting to give some orders to Master Upton, he resigned himself to the officer, and walked quietly in the centre of the guard as far as Westminster-stairs, where they embarked for the Tower.

On stepping into the boat, he again turned to his valet, and said in a low voice, " Good Upton, be sure you let your news be of the soonest, how the stripling at Whitehall gets on, that I may know whether I am in arrears to conscience, or it to me."

Master Upton promised ; and Sedley sprang into the boat, which instantly pushed off, and was not long in conveying him to the Tower.

On landing, he was conducted up two or three flights of narrow, dark stairs, and ushered into a gloomy and not very

spacious room, with a high octagon ceiling. Over the chimney-piece figured, in gold letters, and on two separate slabs of black marble, the names of the conspirators engaged in the gunpowder plot; which, after having leisurely perused, he as leisurely placed his beaver on the table, looked at his hands, and, turning up his cuffs, begged he might have some water; and then flung himself into the deep recess of the old window-seat which looked out upon the water; and there we shall for the present leave him to his meditations.

The events of this morning it was, which, having reached Lady Cordelia, had thrown her into the state that had been described to Lady Berry, in answer to her message.

CHAP. VIII.

Six weeks had now elapsed since the events recorded in the last chapter. Sedley still remained in the Tower, though Lord Ossory had long been pronounced out of danger; and was now almost in a state of perfect convalescence; and had been, for more than a fortnight, removed from the palace to his father's house. The king, during his illness, had evinced the greatest solicitude respecting him; but now that he was recovered, would not see him, and intimated much displeasure towards him as well as Sedley on account of their *melée* in the park; nor was the good Duke of Ormond's loyalty slow in keeping pace with the monarch's anger towards his son; and though the latter lacked neither affection to his father, nor respect to his sovereign, yet did

he appear perfectly happy under the weight of their joint displeasure. We are afraid, that we must further confess, that he would even *willingly* have incurred the displeasure of twenty fathers, and as many monarchs, could it have procured him, as in the present instance, a conviction of his being loved by her whom *he* loved beyond the whole world. It is true, that his wound had been most carefully and scientifically tended by the most renowned physicians, who did not fail to impute the speediness of his recovery to their own skill ; doubtless, much of its merit was theirs ; but it is not quite certain whether *their* specifics would have been so *very* efficacious, had not the most beautiful eyes in the world watched over him ; and a form that was even more than beautiful to him, been ever by to anticipate his slightest wish ; in short, had not Miss Hamilton declared, that she had no natural genius for managing invalids, and so delegated

her office to the Lady Cordelia ! Yes, it was even so ; and having discovered (for lovers have a most unaccountable knack of making discoveries,) that she really loved him ; that she had never loved any one else, and that none of his letters had reached her (which he afterwards further discovered, Lady Dorset had intercepted) ; he grew better with surprising rapidity ; yet was he unwilling to own himself perfectly recovered, or rather he could not bring himself to relinquish the privileges and immunities his malady secured for him, of receiving and giving glances that penetrated into the innermost recesses of that heart, whose secrets were the knowledge for which he thirsted ; the discovery of which enabled him to extract the very essence of those feelings he himself had caused ; — as sunbeams expand a flower, on whose folds their glowing warmth is pressing, and then inhale the sweets themselves have created. But we profess ourselves altogether un-

skilled in matters of this nature ; and therefore, for fear of exposing our ignorance to the more practised and scientific portion of our readers, we will confine ourselves to the simple narration of facts. Lord Ossory had been impatiently walking up and down the saloon, looking at the window, then at the door ; talking to Miss Hamilton ; standing still ; then sitting down ; in short, manifesting every possible species of impatience it was possible to conceive ; for it was long past the hour at which Lady Cordelia usually came to visit him.

“ Really,” said Miss Hamilton, laughing, “ if you would but sit still for five minutes, dear coz., I’d sing you a most appropriate ditty, one of Thomas Lodge’s*, which Corbeta has set to music for me — shall I ?”

“ What a question ? I shall be so much obliged to you, ma belle Elise,” said the earl, handing her a guitar.

* A poet in the reign of Elizabeth.

“ Well, mind that you listen *very* attentively, for I never sing to deaf people ; and you know, none so deaf as those that will not hear,” said she, as she ran over a slight prelude, and then sang the following song : —

“ Love in my bosom, like a bee,
Doth sucke his sweete ;
Now with his wings he plays with me,
Now with his feete.

Within mine eyes he makes his neste,
His bed amid my tender breaste ;
My kisses are his daily feaste,
And yet he robs me of my reste !

Strike I my lute, *he* tunes the string ;
He music plays if I do sing ;
He lends me every thing,
Yet cruel — he my heart doth sting.

What, if I beat the wanton boy
With many a rod ?
He will repay me with annoy ;
I dread his nod.

Then sit thou safely on my knee,
And let thy bower my bosom be ;
Cupid ! so thou but pity me,
I will not wish to part from thee.”

As she concluded the last stanza, the door opened, and a "Brava! brava! cara bella!" issued from a low voice — Lord Ossory raised his eyes; it was only — the Duke of Buckingham.

"Now, verily," said he, seating himself as he spoke, "if the lady did not look a little less disappointed at seeing me, than the gentleman does, I should e'en be for making my greetings and adieus in one breath — however," continued he, smiling, "the offence of your cold looks, young earl, will not rankle in my heart, for I carry my revenge with me, that is, I am the bearer of bad tidings — at least of the report of them."

"Will not your grace name them?" asked Lord Ossory.

"Ay, that will I; but will *your* lordship be so ready to hear them?"

"I know not, till I *have* heard them," replied the earl.

"Why, they concern you," continued

the duke, folding his arms, raising his eye-brows, and looking round the room.

“ You but increase my eagerness to hear them, be they what they may,” said the earl.

“ The king is most exceeding angered against you,” said Buckingham, laconically ; again looking round the room, and swinging one foot as he spoke.

“ Nay, I knew before that I laboured under that misfortune,” replied the earl.

“ And do you likewise know the punishment he has assigned for you ?” asked the duke.

“ Perhaps the Tower ?”

“ Nay, that were nothing ; guess again.”

“ Banishment from court, for ——”

“ That still were light in comparison to the reality.”

“ It is too great then for me to imagine, for I cannot guess it,” said the earl, smiling.

“ You are right to smile now,” cried the duke, “ for I promise, you will find

it hard to smile hereafter. Why, man, he means to sacrifice thee at the shrine of Plutus ; to fetter thee with the chains of Hymen ; to inflict on thee a wife ; in short, to marry you !”

“ To marry me !”

“ Even so ; first, he conceives that no other punishment would be adequate to your offence ; secondly, that from its magnitude, *you* are bound to make him any atonement *he* may think proper ; but the last and chief motive is, that a man whom he has been all his life paying court to, and yet whom he cannot get to *his* court, has a daughter whom he has discovered does you the honour of entertaining a partiality for you, and he thinks to reconcile all interests by making you marry her ; and, above all, to please your father, as she is extremely rich.”

“ My father ! (exclaimed the Earl,) I am sure *he* will never be accessory to any tyranny of the sort. But pray *who* is

this person that I am to be *made* to marry?"

"Nay, be not too sure of any thing," said the duke, with the most provoking calmness; "your father, on the contrary, highly approves of the plan, and says the king is infinitely too good to make you such a return for your breach of all etiquette and disrespect towards him; but for the lady, I am not at liberty to tell her name."

"I would do much," said the earl, walking up and down, while his eye flashed, and his cheek glowed, "I would do much to serve my king, or please my father, and that they both know full well; but by Heaven I swear —"

"Do not swear," interrupted Buckingham, laying his hand upon Lord Ossory's arm, "you know not what rash things oaths are, and how soon you may wish to recall them."

"Besides," said the beautiful Hamilton, whose amazement had prevented

her speaking before, "I am sure my uncle never will force Ossory to marry against his will — it is so unlike him."

"That I know nothing about," replied the duke, "but it is e'en as I tell you; he is marvellously pleased at the notion of this marriage."

"It is true," said the earl, "I have not of late had much intercourse with my father, and that he has avoided, and evinced much displeasure towards me; but he cannot within so short a time be so totally changed; he will at least hear me, and when I tell him that I will do any thing else he or the king may demand, but that no power on earth shall ever force me to this marriage; he surely will not, cannot urge it, or if he does, why then we part for ever."

"Bravely mouthed, at all events," said Buckingham, "but I should advise—"

However, before he had time to advise any thing, the door opened, and the Duke of Ormord appeared. After he

had kissed his niece, and shaken hands with Buckingham, he turned to his son and said —

“ My lord, your late conduct has left me no great room for the pride I have hitherto felt in you. Brawls in the public Mall, in the very presence of your king, what could the commonest blood do more? But let that pass; it is not for me to judge you; he whom you have so much offended, in his merciful care of your health, would not that you should go to him, but will be here anon, to let you know his pleasure, and it is *mine*, that you in all things obey it.”

The earl was about to reply, when a great commotion was heard in the ante-room; the doors were thrown open, and the king himself entered, appareled in a suit of purple velvet; his cloak, which was lined with white satin, and embroidered both inside and out with a deep border of golden oak leaves, was thrown back so as to display the jewelled orders

that he wore; the cloak itself was tied with a gold cord, and tassels in the form of thistles; the downy part of which was imitated by (what singly would have been impalpable) gold threads, but which united, appeared, with every movement of their wearer, like floating sun-beams; in his hat, which was also of violet coloured velvet, were three snow white plumes, fastened with a diamond loop and button; his hose were of white silk, broidered with gold clocks; his square, high-heeled shoes were of white kid, with purple rosettes; in the centres of which sparkled and fluttered a small diamond butterfly; a pair of white military gloves, with purple and gold tops, completed his attire, with which it was evident some pains had been taken. Besides the rapier he wore, he carried one in his hand, as well as a large packet, carefully sealed. Buckingham, the Duke of Ormond, and Miss Hamilton, advanced to meet him; he had no sooner returned

their salutations, than turning to Lords Arlington, Rochester, Dorset, and Killegrew, who accompanied him, he said,

“ My lords, we will dispense with your attendance, till we further require it.”

Upon which they withdrew to the ante-room, and Charles walked to the upper end of the saloon, and took possession of a chair ; at the back of which Buckingham stationed himself, while the Duke of Ormond remained standing in the front, awaiting the king's commands. When the latter had leant back, taken off his hat, and given it to the Duke of Bucks to hold, — placed the sword he held across the chair before him like a barrier ; advanced his right foot, rested his right hand on the arm of the chair, and placed his left in his bosom ; he looked round the apartment, and addressing the Duke of Ormond, said : —

“ Though we are too much beholden to your grace, to peril aught that belongs to you, especially the health of

your son, and therefore would not let him come to us, lest he *should* endanger it, yet, as his late conduct merits some chastisement, we have come here to inflict it, and, therefore, would speak with him ; where is he, my lord ?”

Lord Ossory, who had been standing in the recess of a window, at the king's entrance, needed no further summons, but came forward, and throwing himself at the monarch's feet, there awaited in silence his commands.

“ Young man,” said he, “ it is not for Charles Stuart to deal harshly with any one of your name — *your* house has ever been the best friend of *mine* ; and even *you*, though so few years have conferred on you the honour of belonging to it, have yet, before this, done me good service — and what gratitude cannot repay, at least ingratitude shall not cancel.” He paused for a moment, and then continued — “ We are the more inclined to judge leniently of your offence, in con-

sideration of your never (during the last six weeks) having tried to evitate any blame that might befall you, by transferring the sins of aggression, and such like, to Sir Charles Sedley, whom we are prone to believe, from all we have gathered of the circumstances, might be entitled to them; therefore, my lord, with the first portion of our favour, we restore you your sword, which we hope *you* will never have cause to wield, as your father has so often, and so successfully done his — we mean in our defence; but should such need ever arrive again, we know that it will not rust in its scabbard." As he took the sword from across the chair, and was about to gird it round the young earl — he suddenly stopped, and exclaimed — " But no — *this* has already proved an unlucky servant; suppose we exchange, my lord?" he added, unfastening his own diamond hilted rapier, and girding it round the earl — " Here's one that will guide you

to better fortune ; at least, if it has aught of the donor's temper in it ; and now to show you that we have not, in any way, lost sight of your interests, we will bestow upon you a wife, who shall enact the part of guardian angel, as your own seems to have given up his garrison, thus to let you risk your name and fame in highway brawls under our very eyes ; nay, never look so very pale and woful ; odds fish ! but that we know the race from whence you sprung, we should be apt, by this light, to misjudge you a coward — though we must own, the knell that rings out in that word wife is enough to encompass e'en the stoutest hearts with fear ; but all things have their exceptions, and, in good sooth, the lady we have chosen for you, my lord, might bear the name of wife without appearing less charming for it, even in the eyes of her husband. She is rich as Croesus ; beautiful as an houri ; sage as Pallas ; belongs to a house, noble as your

own, and above all, may, I have no doubt, be prevailed upon to accept of you for a lord and master. What say you, my lord? are you not all impatience to behold her?"

"Sire," replied the young earl, with a pale cheek, but firm voice, "unable as I am to express my sense of the favours — favours as great as they are undeserved, which you have just conferred on me, I must, I fear, in the very act of acknowledging them, again incur your majesty's displeasure, from which they have so generously absolved me; but I solemnly declare that I cannot, on any account, marry this lady; aught else that your majesty can command, I shall have but too much happiness in obeying — even at the expense of my life."

"How!" cried the king, "not have her? out upon all such unsight, unseen prejudices. I tell you, were you once to behold her, you would hang yourself for very grief were she to refuse you. On

this I would lay the best thing in my kingdom."

"I am quite ready," said Buckingham, stepping forward with the most ludicrous expression of countenance imaginable, "I am quite ready to be wagered on any stake your majesty may choose to risk me, particularly on *this*, as I am completely of the same opinion ; so much so, that I would bet a crown, even yours, Sire, of the fact."

"It can be easily decided," rejoined the king, "if our good friend Ormond would bring hither the lady, who is at no greater distance than one of the adjoining rooms."

The duke bowed and withdrew.

"I am sorry," said Lord Ossory, as the door closed on his father, "that your majesty should have willed it so, as I must needs be forced to be what I would not willingly be for the world, wanting in common gallantry to this lady."

"So then," replied the king, "you

still persist in your determination of not having her."

"I do, Sire."

"Note what he says, Buckingham."

"Such resistance to your majesty's wishes is truly disloyal and appalling," said the duke, with a shrug.

"And should be dealt with accordingly," rejoined the monarch, "but that such conduct brings its own punishment along with it."

"You speak truly, Sire," said the earl; "for it is indeed a punishment to run counter to the slightest of your majesty's wishes."

"You may chance to think so before you are much older," replied Charles, with a frown. And he had scarcely spoken, ere the Duke of Ormond returned, leading in a lady, but so closely veiled from head to foot, that it was impossible to descry even the outline of her figure.

"Lady," said the king, rising, and ad-

vancing to meet her, "we give you welcome, though we grieve to say that we had so far mistaken the characters of some persons, as to have been on the verge of bestowing you on an ingrate; but he has saved us from that sin, by positively refusing to accept of you. Is it not so, my lord? — deny it if you can."

"I am sure this lady, be she whom she may," said the earl, "would never deign to accept a heartless hand — and that is all *I* have to bestow."

The lady bowed her head in token of assent.

"Well, then," said the king, "but one more chance remains — this lady shall unveil; and after that we give you twenty-four hours to decide between espousing her, or never seeing our face again, my Lord of Ossory."

The earl cast down his eyes, and sighed heavily, while the king himself proceeded to unveil the lady.

"My Lord of Ossory," said he, in an

authoritative tone, when he had done so, "we command you to raise your eyes, and take your choice of dwelling on this face for ever, or of never seeing ours more!"

The young earl obeyed, and in raising his eyes, met those of — Lady Cordelia Trevillion — even his own Cordelia. He turned towards the king, and tried to speak, but could not. Charles looked for a moment on the group before him.

Lord Dorset, who had re-entered the room with his daughter, and who was now standing by the Duke of Ormond, turned away to hide the tear he could not repress.

"I cannot now stay," said the king, raising Lady Cordelia and her lover, who were at his feet, "to hear my friend Ossory here read his recantation; but if, at the end of the four-and-twenty hours I have given him for considering time, he can do so with a safe conscience; our worthy prelate, Master Roger Boyle,

shall confirm him in his new way of thinking. And now," he continued, placing Lady Cordelia's hand in Lord Ossory's, and pressing them both within his own, "we will leave you to make the best of the penance we have assigned you, and e'en go and give orders for the release of that poor devil Sedley, who must be heartily tired of the attractions of four walls by this time; so much so, that we do not think he will be in any hurry again to assert his title to this lady."

"Or if he does," said the Duke of Bucks, "like Macbeth, he must spill much more blood ere he can make his title good."

"My Lord Dorset," resumed Charles, "though our court has hitherto possessed few attractions for you, we hope that henceforth its being indebted to you for one of its greatest," he bowed to Lady Cordelia as he spoke, "will be an inducement to you to frequent it oftener." And then, turning to Lady Cordelia,

he presented her with the sealed packet he held in his hand, and withdrew, accompanied by the Duke of Ormond and Lord Dorset.

The packet was directed in Lady Dorset's hand, addressed to her daughter, with the proviso of its never being opened but in the event of Mr. Trevillion's death, and Lady Cordelia's marrying again. It contained, in fact, all Lord Ossory's intercepted letters, and a full confession on the part of the countess, which she sent to the king a few hours before her death, begging of him never to deliver it but on either of the above mentioned occasions.

Lady Cordelia withdrew, with Lord Ossory, to peruse them ; and, when they were gone, Rochester entered, and much to the amusement of Miss Hamilton and Buckingham, seated himself in the king's chair ; and, mimicking him to the life, re-acted the scene which had just taken place, by bestowing on his trusty page,

Eden Green, the pretty blushing Alice; with this slight variation, that instead of presenting the damsel with a sealed packet, he presented her with a heavy purse.

CHAP. IX.

AMIDST the gay circles in which Rebecca mixed, she never lost sight of her pious and early friend the prioress, from whom she continually received admonitory letters. She trembled for the consequence of the allurements perpetually thrown in her way. Though Rebecca was very guarded in the account she gave of her present mode of life, and her introduction into the brilliant court of Charles, yet Constance quickly perceived that London was not without powerful attractions; and she was by no means satisfied with the very animated description which she gave of Lady Cordelia Trevillion, whom she considered a very dangerous associate for the young, unsophisticated Rebecca.

But the time now rapidly approached,

when she was to be taken for ever, in all probability, from this bewitching scene — torn from the friendship of Lady Cordelia, whose society would no longer lend a charm to all around her. True, she was soon to be united to the object of her early love ; her tenderness was at length to be rewarded ; all her miseries were over ; happiness already beamed in her face, lightened her step, gladdened her heart ; and that false gaiety, she at times had assumed, was now softened into a chaste sprightliness, that proclaimed care was unknown. When Rebecca beheld the growing felicity of Lord Osory and Lady Cordelia, she thought of her own with Sir John Berry, and could not help sighing at the recollection. She was again seemingly an outcast in the world ; she had found an anchor in Lady Cordelia to rest on ; for how could she assimilate with Sir Ambrose, whose multiplied years, morose temper, and bad opinion of her own sex, robbed her of all

confidence? and where there is no confidence there can be no real love. She now would have full leisure to draw a dangerous comparison between him and others. She checked herself when so inclined; she felt that it was improper, and endeavoured, by self-control, to fulfil the duties of a wife with meekness and submission.

A week previous to Lady Cordelia's nuptials was the period fixed for Sir Ambrose's and Rebecca's final departure from London. Lady Berry in vain endeavoured to assume a cheerful aspect; her removal proved a severe trial; the more so, as her husband preserved the most provoking silence respecting the place of their destination, which might be to the deserts of Siberia, for aught she knew.

She was sitting one morning pensively at the window, with an absent gaze at the passing objects in the Mall, when Lady Cordelia broke in upon her. She stood for some minutes anxiously regard-

ing Rebecca, who, as she breathed a heavy sigh, wiped away her flowing tears.

She coloured when she saw Lady Cordelia, and tried to conceal that she was weeping.

“This will never do,” she exclaimed, taking Rebecca’s hand.

“It is very weak in me,” Lady Berry replied, as she smiled through her tears; “forgive me.”

“I’ll forgive you, if you promise not again to mistake the month, by giving me alternate sunshine and showers, with such a true April face, in so radiant an atmosphere, when all around breathes happiness to mortal eye.”

“Would,” cried Rebecca, in a desponding tone, “that I were permitted to breathe it too!

“Sir Ambrose,” she continued, “will not tell me where he intends taking me. I confess this terrible banishment from my country and my friends requires more firmness than I possess to support

myself without repining; at this moment, too, when, dear Lady Cordelia, to have witnessed your nuptials with Lord Ossory would have made me so happy."

"Well, Rebecca, you must even imagine my happiness; and be assured, imagination cannot paint it too highly, if I know Lord Ossory, and if I know myself, which, by the way, is the most difficult of all things to know."

"Do you remember," she proceeded, "those prophetic lines you, a short time since, made on me, which I have superstitiously treasured up in my heart; they were so pretty, and ran thus:—

"Again I look'd beyond a few short years,
And happiness had chased away the tears
Of this bright creature, —————
All she had known of sorrow past away,
Like night clouds yielding to a summer's day;
Affection that had wander'd through the guile
Of foes, return'd to cheer her with a smile."

After a considerable pause, she added, "Well! as I said before, you must

even imagine my happiness till you come back, and be a witness. I have been wasting my words for this last hour on Sir Ambrose, in vain, on the barbarity of taking you away, and he has given the death-blow to my vanity, in denying my request, having piqued myself so much on my art of persuasion, that even the impenetrable Sir Ambrose could not resist me, is very mortifying; but he is incorrigible."

"Ah! I know it," returned Rebecca; mournfully; "but did you learn where we are going?" she eagerly demanded.

"What a goose-like question," said Lady Cordelia, half smiling. "He is too wary, my dear child, to disclose a matter of such importance, fancying, as he does, there are half a hundred knights errant ready to travel after you, and carry you back, per force, to our gay court. For he shrewdly suspects, and not unnaturally, that so much youth and beauty was formed to pass more current

in the world than his miserly disposition is inclined to suffer."

"I even pleaded that he would only stay till after my marriage, but no, no, was the definitive and only odious word he uttered. Therefore, poor dear Rebecca, you must put the most cheerful face upon it, and follow your destiny, even should it be to Zembla's frozen regions; where not even your heart can freeze, though his is frozen already."

Rebecca could only weep; there was too much truth in Lady Cordelia's badinage, not to sensibly affect her, though before she departed, she used all those persuasive powers of which the moment before she had vainly boasted to soothe and comfort Lady Berry.

Too soon the sad hour arrived which was to separate the friends, when Rebecca bade adieu to all the splendour and allurements of Whitehall. The night before she had taken a melancholy farewell of Lady Cordelia, whose grief at

Lady Berry's departure would have been equal to her own, if it had not been softened by the bright prospects which shone before her, and the tender assiduities of Lord Ossory, who was seldom absent, and who seemed but to live in her society.

Sir Ambrose took a civil leave of the Duke of Buckingham and Sir Charles Sedley, who wore a sort of proud triumph in his manner since his rencontre with Lord Ossory. He fain would have poured a libation of compliments into Lady Berry's ear, but she disdained his insidious arts, and met him with a cold reserve, so repulsive that he soon took leave.

Various were the questions asked of Sir Ambrose's domestics, where their master was going; and why he so suddenly left London? A question it was impossible to solve, for they were quite in the dark, and not a little curious to fathom his motive for so hasty a removal.

When Buckingham and Rochester surmised that Sir Ambrose was actually leaving his house, in consequence of some superstitious foreboding of future evil, they began to be sorry for the lengths they had gone in instigating him, from jealousy and suspicion, to carry his young and lovely wife from the allurements of the court, and the opportunity of receiving such general admiration. But it now was too late to retract. He must take the fate which he had chalked out for himself; though, in trying to avoid the present evil he had created, he probably might plunge into a greater.

CHAP. X.

THE travelling carriage, which was to convey Sir Ambrose and Rebecca from London, he ordered to be at the door by dawn of day, so that before any of the court was stirring, they might be far on their way to Margate.

It was not until they reached Dartford to change horses, Sir Ambrose signified to his wife that it was his intention to embark for Holland. He fixed on Rotterdam first, because he never had been in the Netherlands; and secondly, because he thought it a part of the world where they were less likely to meet with any of the gay court of London; cities of commerce seldom being the resort of the fashionable or idle.

Rebecca, totally indifferent to where she was banished, since finally separated

from Lady Cordelia, remained very passive, and tried to call her attention to the new scenes which hourly were presented.

Sir Ambrose endeavoured to make up for the deprivation she suffered by more good humour and attention, than of late he had shown his wife, but still he was gloomy, abstracted, and sunk into temporary fits of silence, but became comparatively cheerful at every lengthened mile from the metropolis.

When they embarked at Margate, the weather was tempestuous, and the sea very rough. Rebecca beheld with awe and dread the raging billows; she fain would have retarded their voyage, but Sir Ambrose was impatient to lose sight of England, and as the wind proved fair, the master of the vessel put out to sea, unheeding of danger. With fearful rapidity they were carried along, and shortly were within sight of Rotterdam; the sun shone brightly on the waves, and glittered on the edifices of the city. Not.

withstanding the wind drove them into the harbour with an alarming swiftness. The quay was crowded with spectators to witness their safe anchoring, for the vessel tossed from side to side, and at last dashed with such violence, that some of the passengers, who stood on the deck, were the next minute precipitated into the sea as the waves broke over the ship, and some sank to rise no more. Sir Ambrose Templeton was one in the number, thus falling a sacrifice by his wilful delusion to a fate he might have avoided.

Rebecca, who had been desired by her husband to remain in the cabin, as the deck, in such a raging sea, was no place for a woman, heard the dreadful, the appalling death-shriek ; and springing from the floor on which she had thrown herself, sick and terrified, she lost all sense and recollection on beholding a scene too terrible to describe, though the worst was then over ; as, by the daring intrepidity and active exertions of the sailors

belonging to another vessel, the surviving passengers were preserved in the life-boat, and had got safe into harbour.

Rebecca, more dead than alive, was unconscious of the awful fate of her husband. On coming to her senses, she found herself on the quay, supported by a gentleman who had witnessed the disaster, and humanely afforded her every relief and assistance in his power. He was one of the most respectable and opulent merchants in Rotterdam. He had witnessed the fatal catastrophe, and suspected it to be the case, that the lady's husband and female servant had certainly perished.

Pale, exhausted, her hair dishevelled, her garments dripping, Rebecca was a most piteous object to look at. At length she raised her languid eyes, and feebly exclaimed, "Where am I—what is become of my husband? Pray, tell me, Sir, for I am quite bewildered."

"Madam," the gentleman said, as

he anxiously gazed upon her, "be at present satisfied that you are in safe hands, and shall be humanely treated."

"But where," she continued eagerly, "is Sir Ambrose Templeton? — why is he not here, and my servant Amy? — Oh, God! perhaps they both have perished."

He evaded a reply, only humanely entreating her to allow him to conduct her to a place of rest, where she would be properly taken care of, as they were within a stone's throw of one of the principal hotels.

Rebecca, after again and again in vain enquiring for Sir Ambrose, suffered herself to be led to the hotel, where she was humanely attended by the hostess, whose compassion was excited by the melancholy history which the merchant gave of the lady.

Rebecca, from complete exhaustion, fell into a sort of stupefaction, which was succeeded by a fevered, perturbed

sleep, with delirium. When she awoke to a sense of the dreadful calamity which had happened, she became certain that Sir Ambrose had perished with the other passengers, else he would ere now have appeared, as Amy, a few hours afterwards, was conducted by the humane gentleman to the hotel.

Every attention which could be afforded, was bestowed on the helpless Rebecca. The watchful assiduity of the merchant was more than ordinary kindness from, as she imagined, a perfect stranger. He rested not without constantly enquiring after her ; and at length, unfitted as she was to see any one, attained his point in being admitted to her presence.

Rebecca consented to see the gentleman, in the hope of obtaining from him some tidings of her husband, whose fate had been carefully concealed till she was better able to support the information of his death.

Though Lady Berry had never felt that tender affection for him which she had entertained for Sir John Berry, yet he was her husband — she was bound to him for the rest of their existence ; and to lose him by so melancholy an accident, was too terrible not to shock and affect her deeply.

Thrown, too, on the compassion of strangers, in a foreign country, separated from all her friends, unprotected, and alone, was a situation so painful, as to add to her present calamity. Yet she rested her hope where comfort is only to be found.

Rebecca, now sufficiently recovered to see the stranger, whose name she heard with surprise, (though other persons might bear the same,) agreed to admit him ; and he was shown into her apartment, where Amy stood in attendance at the back of her lady's chair.

When the merchant advanced to address her, a crimson glow spread over his

face, and he was evidently much agitated ; while Lady Berry turned deadly pale as she held out her hand, and exclaimed, " Oh ! how shall I speak my gratitude, my thanks. But this, if I mistake not, is not the first kindness bestowed on Rebecca by Mr. Elton. It is the son of my kindest, my best friends, that surely I now see."

" And will Lady Berry," he added, his eyes glistening with delight, " indeed recognise me as such ? and has not time nor circumstances made a change ? I will not do you such injustice, for it would be unlike the Rebecca of former years, could it indeed be so, that now I have providentially been sent to render you every benefit in a land of strangers, I truly rejoice. Consider me then as you always have done, your friend and brother ; command my services ; point out all you wish, all you desire, which I shall be too happy to fulfil."

" Answer me one question," she re-

plied, as the tears streamed from her eyes, "Is Sir Ambrose?" she stopped, unable to proceed.

Mr. Elton (for it actually was the son of her benefactors,) guessed the question, and was silent.

"Perhaps," she said, with hesitation and embarrassment, "you are not aware that Sir Ambrose Templeton is my husband. I am distressed — deeply distressed, till I learn what has become of him. I am afraid his has proved a melancholy fate. Did he perish?"

The earnest solicitude with which she spoke, distressed Mr. Elton almost as much as Rebecca expressed herself distressed.

"He certainly has not been heard of," he gravely replied, "amongst the passengers that are saved."

"Then it is as I feared," she cried, with a burst of anguish. "Poor Sir Ambrose!"

Mr. Elton's situation was delicate;

this was the second time he had been called upon to act as a sort of guardian and protector to Lady Berry, in the first hours of her widowhood, and himself loving her with tender affection, it required some philosophy to conceal those feelings of tenderness, which stole upon him at a moment when he beheld her overwhelmed with sorrow, and looking more interesting and lovely than ever, in all her sober sadness.

Rebecca felt deeply penetrated by Mr. Elton's friendly solicitude, in an hour when she required every kindness to mitigate the dreadful shock which she had experienced ;—the melancholy death of her husband, who, from a mind clouded by superstition, appeared to have accomplished the fate he suffered, and seemed to be an awful lesson not to distrust Providence, nor to suppose ourselves creatures marked out for a destiny, we presumptuously imagine we cannot avert. Sir Ambrose had been wilfully guided by

a prediction, though not actually self-created, to have sufficient influence over his wild and fanciful imagination, as to render him the victim of delusion.

The more Rebecca reflected on the circumstance, the more fully she was convinced that some trick had been played upon her credulous husband by Buckingham and Rochester, from the words which accidentally had dropt from Lady Ossory, who, though she stated not the fact, had overheard sufficient to convince her it was so.

Lady Berry shuddered when she dwelt on the dreadful consequence which had resulted to Sir Ambrose ; and though all ended well that respected Lady Ossory's wild frolic in visiting the magician, she severely chid herself for ever having consented to accompany her to Tower-street ; but now too late to recall her folly, she had received too awful a lesson not to profit by it for the remainder of her life.

When Lady Berry became sufficiently

collected and recovered to think of her future destination, she entered into conversation with Mr. Elton respecting her plans ; as he had offered his services in too friendly a manner to be rejected. She consulted him on the measures it was necessary to take concerning her large property dispersed in various quarters. Rebecca had been accustomed to his opinion and advice. He was the son of her warmest and most attached friends ; and though she felt somewhat embarrassed from the consciousness that formerly he had entertained for her a tender preference ; yet under existing circumstances, with no other person to guide and advise her, his opinion and protection were unavoidable, and would have discovered a want of confidence, and suspicion most ungenerous towards her early friend.

Rebecca wished now to immediately leave Rotterdam, and embark for Liver-

pool, to which port vessels were constantly sailing.

Mr. Elton proposed to Lady Berry a visit to his sister ; but under her present depression of spirits, she preferred the society of her maternal friend Mrs. Chesterville ; and to join her family circle, she thought, would more effectually tend to cheer her mind ; for she was under restraint with the prioress, a feeling which had daily increased since her acquaintance with Lady Ossory, and the admonitory letters she had received on the subject.

Mr. Elton became delicate in pressing her going to his sister, as he observed that Rebecca evidently endeavoured, at least for the present, to evade it. He constantly visited her at the hotel, his affection increasing each time that he saw her. Rebecca was much improved in person and manners since their separation. Though she in some degree retained her natural simplicity of character,

she had acquired a polished gracefulness and acquaintance with life, which, while it gave her consequence, inspired respect, and became her high condition. She was not elevated by false pride; but though dignified, she was meek and naturally timid; and she possessed a frankness and ease the most captivating.

Mr. Elton having no plea to detain her, (though he lived but in her presence,) heard with evident concern the time fixed for her voyage, as soon as she had signified to Mrs. Chesterville her intention of coming to Liverpool.

Mr. Elton could scarcely restrain his grief when he conducted Rebecca to the vessel. She was distressed on observing his emotion; and as she kindly pressed his hand, said, "My worthy, my esteemed friend, be assured that Rebecca Berry cannot forget your repeated acts of kindness in the hour of solitude and affliction. Receive my gratitude, and my warmest good wishes."

“ And will Lady Berry, indeed, recollect there is so insignificant a person in the world, when she has been surrounded by all the great, the gay, the clever ?”

“ For that very reason, the more likely to remember the son of my benefactors.”

She kissed her hand to him as the vessel glided from the shore, and was soon safely landed at Liverpool.

CHAP. XI.

THE meeting of friends, after a long separation, is always delightful. Mrs. Chesterville folded Rebecca to her bosom with the tenderness of a mother; and the greetings between them were those of warm affection.

Mrs. Chesterville beheld with pleasure the great improvement which had taken place in Lady Berry's person and manners, since she last had seen her. Her girlish loveliness was matured into a radiance of beauty which, while it dazzled, bespoke a reflective mind and superior understanding; and her manners, an acquaintance with the world, which had stamped a graceful demeanour and a softness of address, persons always resident in the country rarely acquire.

The accomplishments which she had

acquired, showed the quickness of her capacity. Mr. Chesterville, who was fond of music, was charmed with her taste and skill; and never had her guitar been in such requisition as during her stay at Liverpool.

Mrs. Chesterville possessed a delicacy of mind which kept her silent respecting Rebecca's marriage with Sir Ambrose Templeton. She had fulfilled her vow, and her maternal friend was not sorry that so soon she had been released from a man she considered little less than a monster. This opinion she breathed not; and as Rebecca did not revert, in the most distant manner, to her late marriage, the subject was never discussed.

She was not, however, silent respecting the noble friends with whom she so recently had parted. She spoke of them in the warmest terms of admiration and regard. She amused Mrs. Chesterville, who knew nothing of courts or courtiers, with a thousand anecdotes of the pro-

minent characters of the day ; of their ludicrous pastimes, their voluptuous habits ; of their insinuating and captivating manners, and the incessant vortex of amusement which followed one upon another. Rebecca related all these anecdotes with a vivacity and humour which extremely diverted and surprised Mr. and Mrs. Chesterville ; for she had always shown a pensiveness rather than sprightliness of character.

Rebecca, from her intimacy with Lady Ossory, had caught a spark of her humour ; nay, insensibly, many of her phrases. Often, when persons are in close association, their speech, their manners grow into a similarity, without an attempt at imitation ; for the habits and sentiments of those we love are so familiar, as to be at length imbibed and become one's own. Hence, the importance of choosing wisely our friends and companions. The mind either improves or degenerates. The

heart expands into noble and generous feelings, or becomes sordid and contracted; the taste refines according as the taste is directed; the habits of life, the manners of individuals, are formed into what is amiable, gentle, and graceful by good example; or degenerate into vulgarity and illiberality from associates who soon sink their companions to the same level. The human mind is capable of great expansion, or it is easily warped by prejudice and contraction.

Seated round the Chesterville's happy social fireside, Rebecca fain would have remained for sometime longer, if repeated letters from the prioress had not urged her to come to Bristol, in consequence of having heard from her brother of the death of Sir Ambrose Templeton, and his unexpected encounter with Lady Berry. As it was necessary for her soon to go to London, Rebecca considered it but a just tribute of gratitude and friendship to accede to the prioress's request; and

though reluctant to take leave of her valued friends, she prepared to quit them.

Again was Rebecca fated to separate from the many tender remembrances associated with the Chesterville family from the period of childhood to that of riper years ; she felt she was parting from parents rather than friends, and her spirits sank into deep dejection, when Mr. Chesterville saw her on board the packet, which was to convey her to Bristol.

She had a quick passage, and soon was emerged into quite a different scene of life. When she reached the monastery, its gloomy sequestered appearance affected her spirits. What a change — the solemn silence which prevailed, to all the gaiety of Whitehall ! — every individual bounding with vivacity ; gorgeously apparelled ; amusement the only seeming occupation ; every person outvieing each other in wit, sportiveness, and courtesy. Here shut out from the world, every step was measured ; every word consi-

dered ; and if its inhabitants were unacquainted with its sorrows, so were they alike strangers to its pleasures and enjoyments ; and Rebecca insensibly shrank from the rigid scrutiny which hung on every word and action.

Rebecca chid herself for the restraint which she could not shake off in the presence of the pious sisterhood. The prioress received her with warm affection and kindness ; and at the moment of their meeting, Rebecca experienced in return, a sensation of real pleasure in again embracing a faithful friend ; but when, with uplifted hands and eyes, Constance blessed the holy mother for having preserved her unpolluted amidst the perils by which she had been surrounded, and restored her safe into the bosom of that sanctuary where alone true happiness was to be found, she gladly would have spared her fervent ejaculation.

She was graciously welcomed by all

the nuns, who tried all their little arts to ingratiate themselves in Lady Berry's favour.

Rebecca heard the prioress's multiplicity of questions in silence, and with many a suppressed sigh. They were quite inquisitorial, and at length she was compelled to answer as briefly as she was able.

Rebecca would have been much diverted with the impatient repinings of her maid, Amy, who could ill endure the restraint and diet imposed, after all the luxuries and pastimes she had partaken in London, if matters of higher importance had not engrossed her. At length Lady Berry became almost as impatient as herself, from the constant persecution of the prioress and nuns, leaving no measures untried to make her a member of their community. That persecution was the very incitement against it. There is a natural perversity in human nature, which inclines to rebel where

coercive measures are resorted to, and the person is often foiled in the very point they are most anxious to carry.

Rebecca was by no means devoted to the pleasures of the world ; on the contrary, she preferred the sober enjoyment of domestic life, when enlivened by refined society. She saw nothing within the walls of the monastery to promote even that enjoyment ; only the most bigoted forms and self-denials, which gave neither cheerfulness to the spirits, nor health to the frame.

The nuns were little better than living automaton, moving by clock-work ; they rose, prayed, fasted ; prayed again and again ; going through the same ceremonies to the end of time.

After some weeks' residence in the monastery, it became so painful to Rebecca the perpetual contention with a friend she so much valued, that her health began to suffer, and her spirits to decline,

owing to the prioress's unwearied persecution.

"Pray, my lady," said Amy, one day to Rebecca, when she found her weeping, "do leave this dismal place ; it will be your death, and I am sure mine, if you stay much longer ; what with fasting and praying day and night, I am worn to a skeleton. It would do one's heart good to hear some of the merry tunes we used to have at Whitehall, instead of the nuns' doleful chanting, for all the world, like the burial service. Those were blithesome days I warrant me."

Lady Berry consoled Amy, by assuring her, before it was very long she should quit Bristol and return to London.

Amy was in a transport at the intelligence.

Rebecca determined to take the first favourable opportunity of breaking the subject to the prioress.

A letter, the next day, from Lady Os-sory, confirmed her in her purpose of

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leaving the monastery, and accepting the countess's invitation.

“ From Cordelia, Countess of Ossory, to the Lady Berry.

“ Did I not know you to be the most charitable of ladies, I might well despair of this letter finding favour in your sight, when it had reached your hands ; as, in good sooth, it is nothing more or less than a petition, which you will no doubt think ought to be deferred, till I have clothed at least the first half-dozen sentences herein contained with a mourning suitable to make acquaintance with your affliction. Yet, whatever appearance my words may wear, they are traitors to my thoughts if they do not sincerely partake of any sorrow that oppresses you, however unable *I* may be to appreciate its *nature*. Indeed you must allow, my dear Lady Berry, (that is, if you *are* half as sensible as you *were*,) that

I, who know nothing of husbands, beyond having just got the best in the world, can be but little skilled in the art of condolence for one who, forgive me if I say, did not, in my idea, quite answer this description; but as I am one of those wise, or if you will, vain persons, who never attempt any thing in which I am not excellent, I shall leave this subject at rest from my interference, and at once enter on my avocation of begging, for which, I hope, my success will prove me fully competent. And here commenceth my first essay: I do entreat, most excellent lady, in the name of mercy, and for the sake of Lord Ossory and myself, that you will in pity bestow on us some weeks of your company, were it but to see how marvellously happiness changeth the disposition. When I was unhappy, as you may well remember, I was a miser with my grief, and did not care that any body should share, or even see it. But now that I am happy, who is so ostentatious? I

wish to display my wealth to the whole world, and to let them envy me if they like; for in truth they well may, as few can ever be on a par with me in this respect. Yet do not think that I wish *you* to come here for the purpose of corrupting you into the engendering of so evil a fault as envy; as I chiefly wish your presence, from a strange fancy which possesses me, that this very happiness of which I have been speaking, is as contagious as the plague or the scarlet fever. You can but come and try; and if, after you have thoroughly caught the infection, you weary of the malady, you may return to your monastery, where, I have no doubt, you will be completely cured of it in a very short time; but, as little Jermyn says, ‘Nothing is to be had for nothing in this world,’ so I must bribe you. Nay, do not toss your pretty head, and look offended at the word; for my Lord Shaftesbury averred the other day, that ‘every one may be bribed, if we can

but find out *what* to bribe them *with*." So nothing now remains, but for me to find out *what will* bribe *you*. Let me see, suppose I try news, the news of this good city, in order to remind you of how well the air of Whitehall used to agree with you.

"Well then, to begin: Lady Muskerri has presented her lord with a little Princess of Babylon; and he, having wished for an heir, (and men always thinking that they should have what they wish for,) has gone down to Summerhill, there to get over his disappointment as he best can; while the Duke of Bucks has set it about that the young Muskerri was born with St. Vitus's dance, which he says is natural enough, considering that St. Vitus (the only saint famed for dancing) is his mother's patron saint, or she his patron sinner, he does not exactly know which way the matter stands.

"The news of the queen's illness has,

of course, reached you ; but I do not think the particulars can have done so yet. So take them as they happened : Last Thursday, about twelve at noon, the king was summoned to her majesty's apartments ; where he found the Duchess of York, the Countess of Penètra, Miss Jennings, and Miss Middleton all kneeling round the bed, bathed in tears. The queen, who was sitting up in the bed supported by pillows, took his hand, and pressing it in her's, said, in a faint inarticulate voice, that she should die as she had lived, wishing him every happiness.

“ The king, who is (as you know) as far as impulse goes, the best hearted person in the world, was so affected, that he embraced her, and conjured her to ‘ live for his sake.’ The poor queen, who, during her life, had never disregarded his slightest request, did not, even when dying, forget the vows of obedience she had plighted to him, and so, taking him at his word, she from that

hour grew better.* But the most edifying circumstance of all is, the extreme and decorous grief that continues spread over the king's visage, notwithstanding that his consort is now almost quite recovered; but this all the courtiers attribute to the excessive chagrin which must have seized him at the fear of losing her majesty, and which, though now no longer seasonable, has taken such strong hold of him, that it is beyond his strength to shake it off. But Miss Stewart does her part, and keeps him in countenance, for, during the queen's indisposition, she had shut herself up with great dignity, refusing even to see the king, for, not content with governing *him*, she had taken the resolution of extending her empire to his subjects and dominions; this little plan has, however, been frustrated by her *present* majesty's sudden and unex-

* For the most amusing account of this circumstance, see Count A. Hamilton's Memoirs of the Comte de Gramont.

pected recovery. However it would be too much even for the beautiful Stewart, to have *all* her wishes *crowned*, and the victories she has gained over Lady Castlemaine and La Kiraoulle,* in the wars of coaches, jewels, and presentations, rival those of Condé and Turenne, at least in *number*; and besides this little disappointment gives a shade of sadness to her beauty, which quite counteracts that silly expression which was the only thing that prevented its being perfect. So you see, *à tout malheur quelque chose est bonne*, and I doubt if it is not worth losing a throne for an increase of beauty, at least to her; for had it been the reverse, and that she had lost her beauty, she might also have lost her empire; as it is, she has only lost a kingdom, but, it seems, *she* will not view the matter in this light, as it is bruited about that she means to exile her ambition to

* Afterwards Duchess of Portsmouth.

a ducal coronet, and become Duchess of Richmond; and that the Duke of Bucks, who cannot live without a plot, is making all the necessary arrangements to transplant this flower from Whitehall to the bowers of Richmond.

“ My cousin Elizabeth and De Gramont are, just as they were, not one bit farther or nearer to becoming all in all to each other. Anthony Hamilton is gone to France, as he says there is no getting coffee in England that is drinkable. — Sir Charles Sedley has betaken himself to the sea coast in Kent, with the pretty Maraquita Corvo; the old Jew her father is frantic, and wants to insist upon Sedley’s marrying her; but he only reminds Corvo of his own words *which* used to aver, that ‘ none but de firsh dukesh, or lordsh in de kingdom should marry hish daughtersh;’ and Sedley tells him that he is ‘ neither the one nor the other, but a mere *gentleman*, which he says, in good Latin, means the *rara*

avis in terra of Whitehall.' Here endeth all my news, and it is time that it should, for my courier is going off, and my letter is as long, as long, as we hope, my dear Lady Berry, your visit will be to us. Ossory sends a thousand greetings, entreaties, and good wishes, but I have not room for my own, so shall not insert his. Now, 'lady fair, a fair good night;' and may this find you mine, as it leaves me yours, in

"All truth and sincerity,

"CORDELIA OSSORY."

The perusal of Lady Ossory's letter confirmed Rebecca in her intention to leave Bristol without delay. She had a difficult part to act, foreseeing, when she finally signified her intention, it would weaken the friendship existing between the prioress and herself; yet, wherefore barter her happiness and comfort, merely to indulge a persecuting spirit founded on error and prejudice? Since the death

of Sir Ambrose, the prioress had become more zealous and active in her endeavours to withdraw Rebecca wholly from the world. Could she, by sacrificing her own enjoyments, have added to those of her friend, except ideally, she might have relinquished every selfish consideration, from a sense of gratitude for the friendly support afforded by her parents, when she was destitute of a home and protection; but, in the present instance, it would only be yielding to the most erroneous opinion, without any satisfaction to compensate for so doing.

There are moments, however, when our firmest resolves yield to the sudden impulse of weakness; and such Rebecca now experienced, as her eyes met the benign, placid countenance of the prioress; and her heart melted into tenderness as she meant to signify her departure, and the words died on her lips.

“What disturbs our daughter Rebecca?” anxiously enquired the prioress;

“speak freely; your brow is ruffled, and your cheek colourless.”

“I will,” answered Rebecca, “as it is your desire; though sensible what I have to say may prove displeasing, I will be sincere and candid.”

“Sincerity becomes every one; this is no place for worldly guile.”

“I daily find my health declining,” Lady Berry continued, in a faltering accent; “I must change the scene—the confinement of this sanctuary does not agree with me.”

“Rather say,” interrupted the prioress, with asperity, “this holy sanctuary is unsuited to your late vitiated habits, and has weaned you from the care of your immortal soul. Your gay associate, the Lady Ossory, that court-butterfly, has filled your mind with silly vanity, stolen your affection from your oldest friends, and would carry you from yourself, by leading you into continual scenes of pleasure.”

“Indeed,” cried Rebecca, warmly, “you are mistaken. You know not the countess — you cannot know her. Oh ! if you did, how different would be your opinion.”

“You intend going to her house,” answered the prioress, with a look of scrutiny ; “I am sure she has invited you.”

Lady Berry coloured, and was silent.

“You stand,” proceeded the prioress, “on the brink of a precipice, ready to fall. You are now good and virtuous — Oh ! Rebecca, fly from temptation while you are able — shun the impending danger spread to ensnare you. What a court is Charles’s ! — abounding with licentiousness, vice, and intrigue — women so notoriously indecorous — men so depraved, are such to prove the future associates of Rebecca ? Of Lady Ossory I can know only by general report ; nor any thing against her, except that her mansion is the resort of the most conspi-

cuous for wit, talents, and court flattery. Lady Ossory has a husband to protect, to sanction her — Lady Berry now stands alone in a world in which she is a mere novice, ignorant of its modes, not yet initiated in its vices, and not sufficiently wary to see the danger before her. Summon resolution to refuse the invitation I guess you have received from Lady Ossory.”

“That,” answered Rebecca, with firmness, “is impossible; I must go to London; my affairs require it: and to whom can I go now, without a home and without friends, except to Lady Ossory?”

“Then,” exclaimed the prioress, vainly striving to conceal her displeasure, “it is all settled, without even asking my opinion.

“How eager you are to fly into a world abounding with vanity and deceit! Poor, silly young woman! to wilfully shut your eyes to the dangers by which you are surrounded. Since you are in-

corrigible, you must, daughter, even follow your own wayward inclination. Here we use no coercion — whatever befalls you rests on your own head. I would warn, I would keep you from future evil, but you will not listen to the voice of your spiritual monitor.”

Rebecca could only weep in silence, for she was too much hurt and affected to contend with the prioress, and was resolved to depart.

The prioress, finding argument and persuasion unavailing, merely added, “Though you are young, affluent, and uncontrolled — mistress of your actions, remember, daughter, you must render a strict account of every word and deed. May you not be found wanting when that period arrives ! And now receive my last benediction.”

“Not your last, I trust,” said the weeping Rebecca ; “we shall meet again, without you wholly renounce me.”

The prioress had a sincere affection

for Lady Berry ; that affection prompted her present zeal ; but, conscious she had no right to detain her, she suffered her to depart, with a promise that she would write to her from time to time.

CHAP. XII.

ONCE more safely landed on the fertile shores of England, Rebecca made the best of her way to Whitehall.

As she drew near that spot of gaiety and splendour, where pleasure alone presided, she again felt herself desolate and alone; and, as she gazed on the passing objects so familiar to her, she bestowed a sigh to the memory of her late husband, who, having unfortunately listened with too credulous an ear to the imposing and witty Rochester, had fallen into the snare he had prepared for him, and become the fatal victim of his own folly.

Rebecca remarked, from the day of the masquerade, Sir Ambrose was an altered man, even more than usually abstracted, gloomy, suspicious, and led

away, to all appearance, by some wild phantasy, which had governed his actions.

Lady Ossory's warm and kind heart beat not to the rules of cold ceremony. When she heard Lady Berry was arrived, she flew into the saloon with open arms to receive her.

Rebecca tried to chase away her tears ; for she was touched with her tender reception, as she gracefully took her arm, and led her into her own dressing-room.

" I will not at present," she said, " impose on you the society of a stranger, though that stranger is my husband ; and impatient as Lord Ossory is to see my dear Rebecca, I cannot allow him even to bid you welcome, till you assure me that it is quite agreeable to join our domestic circle, for we are very domestic ; and I am for ever ready to exclaim, in the words of the divine Milton,

" With him

Conversing I forget all time,
All seasons, and their change ; all please alike."

“ We are so happy,” Lady Ossory continued, warmly ; “ too happy, I would almost say, for life is so brief.”

“ Dear Lady Ossory,” interrupted Rebecca, “ long be your felicity ; may no cloud of sorrow ever obscure it. You have the power of diffusing happiness to others, and will not go unrequited.”

When Rebecca was introduced to the young earl, she did not wonder that he had engaged the early affections of the Lady Cordelia. He appeared just the person to subdue and captivate a mind like hers. The gracefulness of his demeanour, with a face and person so strikingly handsome, that air of nobility, which gave dignity and refinement to his character, could not pass unnoticed ; and when to all these was combined a spirit the most exalted, yet daring, which sprung from the best of feelings, it was very natural that the Lady Cordelia Germaine should become devoted to a youth who possessed all these powerful

attractions to win the affections of a young lady, his equal in rank, in beauty, and in sense.

The very stratagems used to separate and alienate them from each other had drawn them more closely together. At length united, never except by death to separate, Rebecca contemplated felicity so perfect with a sensation of envy. Such had been her felicity — pure and perfect as Lady Ossory's — during her short union with Sir John Berry ; and there were moments when she found herself obliged to withdraw from their engaging society, that she might weep alone, in her bereavement of the only object of her interest, and, she might add, of her genuine affection.

CHAP. XIII.

LADY Cordelia's marriage with Lord Ossory led her into even more than her usual routine of company, which rendered Rebecca listless and dissatisfied with her present mode of life. Though Lady Ossory's kindness was unbounded, and she lavished on her guest all that tenderness and sympathy which she so well knew how to bestow under her present calamity, yet Lady Ossory was somewhat incredulous as to the affliction she felt in the loss of a husband, so eccentric as Sir Ambrose Templeton, with habits which must have proved so little congenial to his wife's taste, together with the great disparity of years that existed between them; but she had too

high a respect for such virtuous sorrow not to the more admire Lady Berry for the cause; who, with her youth and beauty, could withdraw herself entirely from the amusing resort of visitors which continually filled her house. Lady Ossory was too well bred not to leave Rebecca wholly to the guidance of her own inclination. She had herself such a dislike to restraint or compulsion of any sort, she was the last person to throw it on others; though there were times, when, in her arch way, she, with a significant look, enquired, "if she was not almost weary of the self-banishment imposed?" Then added, "it really is quite cruel to hide such beauty from a world in which you are so universally admired."

Lady Berry, with a mournful smile, replied, "Ah! Lady Ossory, how little do you still know of the simple, unsophisticated Rebecca, if for a moment you can really think I am imposing an

act of duty, or rather practising a customary form, which is not entirely prompted by inclination.

“ I have just,” she continued, “ seen enough of your world of fashion, of gaiety, of folly, to have amused me for the passing hour, as a child is diverted with some pretty bauble, or some novice, who, like myself, at first is ushered into the world to witness all its extraordinary spectacles, filled with such an odd variety of characters as must amuse and astonish for the time.”

“ Most wise reasoning,” exclaimed Lady Ossory, laughing.

“ Allow me,” Rebecca continued, “ seriously to ask you, my friend, whether all the whimsical scenes of festivities and revels, in which you have partaken with our monarch, his nobles, and his subjects, wearing so many fantastic guises, have internally contributed as much to your happiness as they have to

your amusement. I am sure you cannot say they have."

"Why, no! I believe not," returned Lady Ossory, with a half suppressed sigh; "but what," she added, "we have been born and bred in, becomes as natural to us, as necessary to us as our sleep and food."

"True," replied Rebecca, "but such scenes were new to me; one substantial pleasure," she gracefully added, "has been afforded, that of knowing you."

"Well," cried Lady Ossory, "that is so prettily said, that at least you have caught some of the court flattery, if you despise its follies."

"I do not flatter," replied Rebecca; "but hear me, my friend, on a subject painful to name, nor think me ungrateful, capricious, or weary of your society, after several weeks' trial, if I add, that, listless and unhappy in this gay metropolis, I languish to once more return to Westwood Park, at least for a time."

“ Merely,” interrupted Lady Ossory, “ to indulge a fond and painful remembrance it were wise not to revive.”

“ Oh !” said Rebecca, warmly, “ there is a joy in such grief the desolate heart alone can know.”

Lady Ossory shook her head ; after a pause she proceeded, with tender solicitude : “ If, Rebecca, you are in serious earnest to depart, and are not quite weary of the society of such an old-fashioned couple as Ossory and myself, who never quarrel, nor are tired of each other, we will even speed our parting guest, and accompany you to Westwood Park, the paradise which your fancy has created ; for as to your going mope, mope by yourself, I have too much regard for you to endure the very idea ; therefore prepare for such noble guests.”

Rebecca was delighted with Lady Ossory’s proposal ; and when they assembled at dinner, the plan was finally settled.

Lady Berry wrote to her steward to have the mansion at Westwood immediately prepared for the reception of her friends and herself.

CHAP. XIV.

How grateful did Rebecca feel for Sir John Berry's generous consideration in bestowing on her Westwood Park.

There she would principally reside, with the exception of spending sometimes a few months at Grove House, Stratford-le-Bow, bequeathed to her by Mr. Templeton, that she might testify her respect for his memory, and not wholly exclude herself from the society of Lady Ossory.

But of the court she meant to take a final leave. She first had mixed in its magic circle rather to please Sir Ambrose Templeton, than to gratify her own taste ; for her simple habits in early life had now become her inclination, though she had not been void of a high sense of enjoyment, when she joined in the more

private society of those brilliant personages who, of late, had formed so large a portion of her acquaintance.

The splendid mansion, occupied by her late husband at Whitehall, now possessed no attractions for Lady Berry. By her order it was again put up for sale. Sir Ambrose had left her munificently. Yorkshire was the last place (except to visit her parents) to which choice would lead her ; and Gloomore Castle remained unoccupied, except by two domestics.

No regrets attended Rebecca's final departure from London, when accompanied by such cheering agreeable friends. True, she looked forward with a mournful sense of enjoyment, to the still tranquillity of Westwood Park ; but she had, even in the hours of her heaviest sorrow, been soothed by the fond remembrance of Sir John Berry's tender affection ; and now it surely would be doing no violence to the departed shade of Sir Ambrose Templeton, by indulging the che-

rished image of the only man she could be said to love.

Lord and Lady Ossory felt real concern in parting with their interesting guest ; so unlike, as the countess said, every one she hitherto had seen in that region of folly and gaiety in which she mixed. There was a simple grace, a modest dignity, a sincerity and truth, in all she said, so uncommon ; a sort of sympathy of sentiment and feeling had drawn them together, with tastes, minds, and habits totally dissimilar. One was the creature of impulse and feeling ; the other, that of sedateness and reflection ; yet they were so far similar, that though Lady Ossory was the offspring of the graces, and tutored in the school of flattery and dissimulation, she had, as Sir Ambrose Templeton remarked, nothing artificial about her. The natural tenderness of her heart had not been rendered callous by a deceitful unfeeling world ; and the sympathy of her nature was al-

ways alive to the griefs and distresses of others ; she participated in the one, and bountifully relieved the other.

Lady Berry entertained her noble guests with a munificence and easy grace which did credit to her taste and hospitality.

At the expiration of a month, they took an affectionate leave of their fair hostess, and proceeded direct from Westwood to London, to again emerge into court society and court scenes.

Rebecca had been enchanted with the society of Lord and Lady Ossory ; for they appeared ten times more delightful when withdrawn from the court, partaking, with seeming enjoyment, of those natural pleasures which result from books, rural scenes, and pastimes ; rational recreations, which neither destroy the health, nor vitiate the mind. There were moments when she almost regretted ever having known Lady Ossory ; for she sustained such a blank from her absence

that she was certain her future society and friendship was essential to her happiness through life.

Lady Berry had not been left many weeks alone at Westwood, when she was surprised by a visit from Mr. Thomas Elton, who, having been made the executor of Sir John Berry, came to her on some necessary arrangements of her affairs.

She received him with painful embarrassment; for she was not ignorant of the tender sentiments he entertained for her, and which was shortly afterwards confirmed by an offer of his hand at the expiration of a twelvemonth.

His proposal distressed Lady Berry exceedingly. During her widowhood, when she mourned the loss of Sir John Berry with heartfelt grief, she was compelled to marry Sir Ambrose Templeton, owing to a vow which she considered it a religious obligation to fulfil. Again a free agent, the ardour with which Mr. Elton pressed his suit was not merely

displeasing but painful ; for while she with firmness rejected his addresses, she was at the same time obliged to frame an excuse for leaving Westwood, to enable her to give him a dismissal, and she formed the hasty plan of visiting Mrs. Chesterville, to whom she wrote of her intention.

Delicacy and decorum now obliged Mr. Elton to depart, but not without his having first drawn from Rebecca a reluctant promise, that she would permit him to see her from time to time as a friend.

As the son of her late respected and kind benefactress, and the brother of the prioress, his request could not actually be refused ; therefore Rebecca, while she urged the hopelessness of his cause as a lover, gave a promise that she would sometimes admit of his visits as a friend ; and told him that on the following day she was going to Liverpool.

Lady Berry did violence to her incli-

nation in leaving Westwood Park.—
“ Sweet scene,” she exclaimed, “ of departed felicity ! how soothing to my desolate heart are all your pensile beauties ! Ah ! how cheering, how lovely has all around appeared, when brightened by the presence of my friends.

“ But I must go,” she added, as she mournfully gazed around, and snatched up a guitar to which Lady Ossory had so sweetly sung.

“ No longer,” she continued, “ will its touch vibrate to her soft melodious sounds ; nor you, immortal Shakspeare (glancing her eye on a volume accidentally left open), be again read by her enchanting voice, with all that touching pathos which brings the melancholy Jaques, the love-lorn Orlando, and the tender Rosalind all before me.” She took up the book, which she meant, with the guitar, to make the companion of her journey, and on the following day, attended by Amy, left Westwood Park.

. During the three following years Rebecca spent her time chiefly between Grove-house, Bow, and Leicestershire, and it was during that period Mr. Elton, by persevering in his suit, obtained at length Lady Berry's hand.

In the year 1694 Lady Berry died, and in Stepney church-yard is to be seen a plain monument, inscribed to her, which perpetuates the memory of

“THE FISH AND THE RING.”

NOTES.

Lady Berry's Monument in Stepney Church-yard.

“ On the east wall of the chancel is the monument of Dame Rebecca Berry, wife of Thomas Elton, of Stratford Bow, and relict of Sir John Berry, 1696.” — *Lysons's Environs of London*.

The arms to this monument are paly of six, on a bend three mullets, Elton empaling a fish, and in the dexter chief point an amulet between two bends wavy. This coat of arms, which exactly corresponds with that borne by Ventris of Cambridge, as described in the visitation of that county at the Herald's office, has given rise to a tradition, that Lady Berry was the heroine of a popular ballad, called “ The Cruel Knight; or Fortunate Farmer's Daughter.” The story is briefly this :

“ A knight, passing by a cottage, heard the cries of a woman in labour. His knowledge in the occult science informs him that the child then born was destined to be his wife. He endeavours to elude the decrees of fate, and avoid so ignoble an alliance, by various attempts to destroy the child, which are defeated. At length, when grown to woman's estate, he takes her to the sea-side, intending to drown her, but relents; at the same time throwing a ring into the sea, he commands her never to see his face again, on pain of instant death, unless she can produce the ring. She afterwards becomes a cook, and finds the ring in the cod-fish, as she is dressing it for dinner. The marriage takes place of course.

“ The ballad, it must be observed, lays the scene of this story in Yorkshire.”—*Lysons's Environs of London*.

THE CRUEL KNIGHT;

OR,

The Fortunate Farmer's Daughter.

IN famous York city a farmer did dwell,
Who was belov'd by his neighbours well,
He had a wife that was virtuous and fair,
And by her he had a young child every year.
In seven years six children he had,
Which made their parents' hearts full glad,

But in a short time, as we did hear say,
The farmer in wealth and stock did decay.
Tho' that once he had riches in store,
In a little time he grew very poor;
He strove all he could, but alas ! could not thrive,
He hardly could keep his children alive.
The children came faster than silver or gold,
For his wife conceiv'd again as we are told,
And when the time came, in labour she fell,
But if you will mind, an odd story I'll tell ;
A noble rich knight by chance did ride by,
And hearing this woman shriek and cry,
He being well learned in the planets and signs,
Did look in the book which puzzled his mind.
For the more he did look the more he did read,
And found that fate the child had decreed,
Who was born in that house the same tide,
He found it was she that must be his bride ;
But judge how the knight was disturbed in mind,
When he in that book his fortune did find ;
He quickly rode home, and was sorely oppress'd,
From that sad moment he could take no rest.
At night he did toss and tumble in his bed,
And very strange projects came into his head ;
Then he was resolv'd, and soon try'd indeed,
To alter the fortune he found was decreed.
With a vexing heart next morning he rose,
And to the house of the farmer he goes,
And asked the man, with a heart full of spite,
If the child was alive that was born last night ?
Worthy sir, said the farmer, altho' I am poor,
I had one born last night, and six born before ;

Four sons and three daughters I now have alive,
They are all in good health, and likely to thrive;
The knight reply'd, if that seven you have,
Let me have the youngest, I'll keep it most brave;
For you very well one daughter may spare,
And when I die, I'll make her my heir;
For I am a knight of a noble degree,
And if you will part with your child unto me,
Full three thousand pounds I'll unto thee give,
When I from your hands your daughter receive;
The father and mother with tears in their eyes,
Did hear this kind offer, and were in a surprise,
And seeing the knight was so noble and gay,
Presented the infant unto him that day.
But they spoke to him with words most mild,
We beseech thee, good sir, be kind to our child;
You need not mind, the knight he did say,
I will maintain her both gallant and gay;
So with this sweet babe away he did ride,
Until he came to a broad river's side,
Being cruelly bent, he resolv'd indeed,
To drown the young infant that day with speed,
Saying, if you live you must be my wife,
So I am resolv'd to bereave you of life;
For till you are dead I no comfort can have,
Wherefore you shall die in a watery grave.
In saying of this, that moment, they say,
He flung the babe into the river straightway,
And being well pleased when this he had done,
He leap'd on his horse, and straight he rode home.
But mind how good fortune for her did provide,
She was drove right on her back by the tide,

Where a man was a fishing, as fortune would have,
When she was floating along with the waves.
He took her up, but was in a maze,
He kiss'd her, and press'd her, and on her did gaze,
And he having ne'er a child in his life,
He straight did carry her home to his wife ;
His wife was pleased, the child to see,
And said, my dearest husband; be rul'd by me,
Since we have no child, if you'll let me alone,
We will keep this, and call it our own.
The good man consented, as we have been told,
And spared for neither silver nor gold ;
Until she was eleven full years,
And then her beauty began for to appear.
The fisherman was one day at an inn,
And several gentlemen drinking with him ;
His wife sent this girl to call her husband home,
But when she into the drinking room came,
The gentlemen there were amazed to see
The fisherman's daughter so full of beauty.
They asked him then if she was his own ?
And he told them the story before he went home :
As I was a fishing within my own bounds,
One Monday morning this sweet babe I found ;
Or else she had lain in a watery grave ;
And this was the account which now he gave.
The cruel knight was in the company,
And hearing the fisherman tell his story,
He was vex'd at the heart to see her alive,
And how to destroy her he again did contrive.
Then spoke the knight, and unto him said,
If you will but part with that sweet maid,

I'll give you whatever your heart can devise,
For she in time to great riches may rise ;
The fisherman answered, with a modest grace,
I cannot, unless my dear wife were in place ;
Get first her consent, you shall have mine of me,
And then to go with you, sir, she is free ;
The wife she did also as freely consent,
But little they thought of his intent.
He kept her a month very bravely, they say,
And then he contrived to send her away.
He had a great brother in fair Lancashire,
A noble rich man worth ten thousand a year ;
And he sent this girl unto him with speed,
In hopes he would act a most cruel deed.
He sent a man with her likewise they say,
But as they did lodge at an inn on the way,
A thief in the house with an evil intent,
To rob the portmanteau immediately went ;
But the thief was amazed, when he could not find
Either silver or gold, or ought to his mind,
But only a letter, the which he did read,
And soon put an end to this tragical deed.
The knight had wrote to his brother that day,
To make this poor innocent damsel away,
With sword or with poison that very same night,
And not let her live 'till the morning light.
The thief read the letter, and had so much grace
To tear it, and wrote in the very same place,
Dear brother, receive this maiden from me,
And bring her up well as a maiden should be ;
Let her be esteemed, dear brother, I pray,
Let servants attend her by night and by day,

For she is a lady of noble worth,
A nobler lady ne'er lived in the North ;
Let her have good learning, dear brother I pray,
And for the same I will sufficiently pay ;
And so loving brother, this letter I send,
Subscribing myself your dear brother and friend.
The servant and maid were still innocent,
And onward their journey next day they went ;
Before sun-set to the knight's house they came,
Where the servant left her and came home again,
The girl was attended most nobly indeed,
With the servants to attend her with speed ;
Where she did continue a twelvemonth's space,
'Till this cruel knight came to this place.
As he and his brother together did talk,
He spy'd the young maid in the garden to walk ;
She look'd most beautiful, pleasant, and gay,
Like to sweet Aurora, or the goddess of May,
He was in a passion when he did her spy.
Did you not do as in the letter I writ ?
His brother reply'd, it is done every bit.
No, no, said the knight, it is not so I see,
Therefore she shall back again go with me ;
But his brother shew'd him the letter that day,
Then he was amazed and nothing did say.
Soon after the knight took this maiden away,
And with her did ride till they came to the sea ;
Then looking upon her with anger and spite,
He spoke to the maiden and bid her alight.
The maid from the horse immediately went,
Humbling to think what was his intent.
And he, for this hour's your last,
Thus, I command you in haste.

This virgin, with tears, on her knees did reply,
Oh ! what have I done, sir, that now I must die ;
Oh ! let me but know how I offend,
I'll study each hour to make you amends.
Ah ! spare my life, and I'll wander forlorn,
And never come near you while I have breath.
He hearing the pitiful moan she did make,
Straight from his finger a ring he did take.
He then to this maiden these words did say,
This ring in the water I'll now throw away ;
Pray look on it well for the possey is plain,
That you when you see it may know it again ;
I charge you for life never come in my sight,
For if you do I shall owe you a spite,
Unless you do bring the same unto me,
With that he let the ring drop into the sea,
Which when he had done, away he did go,
And left her to wander in sorrow and woe ;
She rambled all night and at length did espy,
A homely poor cottage and to it did hie ;
Being hungry and cold and her heart full of grief,
She went to this cottage to ask for relief ;
The people reliev'd her, and the next day
They got her a service, as I did hear say,
At a nobleman's house not far from the place,
Where she did behave with a modest grace.
She was a cook-maid and forgot all times past,
But observe the wonder that comes at last :
As she a fish dinner was dressing one day,
And opened the head of a cod, as they say,
She found such a ring and was in a maze,
And she in great wonder upon it did gaze,

And viewing it well she found to be,
The very same ring the knight dropt in the sea.
She smil'd when she saw it, and bless'd her kind fate,
But did to no creature the secret relate.
This maid in her place did all maidens excel,
That the lady took notice, and lik'd her well ;
Saying she was born of some noble degree,
And took her for her companion to be.
Then he ask'd the lady to grant him a boon,
And said, it was to walk with that virgin alone.
The lady consenting, telling the young maid,
By him she need not fear to be betray'd.
When he first met her — Thou strumpet, said he,
Did I not charge thee never more to see me ;
This hour's the last — to the world bid good night,
For being so bold to appear in my sight.
Said she, in the sea, sir, you flung your ring,
And bid me not see you, unless I did bring
The same unto you : — Now I have it, cries she,
Behold, 'tis the same which you flung in the sea.
When the knight saw it, he flew to her arms,
And said, thou hast a million of charms :
Said he, charming creature, pray pardon me,
Who often contrived the ruin of thee ;
'Tis in vain to alter what heaven doth decree,
For I find you are born my wife to be :
Then wedded they were, as I did hear say,
And now she's a lady both gallant and gay.
They quickly unto her parents did haste,
Where the knight told the story of what had past ;
But ask'd their pardon upon his bare knee,
Who gave it and rejoiced their daughter to see,

Then they for the fisherman and his wife sent,
And for their past troubles did them content ;
So there was joy unto all them that did see,
The farmer's young daughter a lady to be.

“ Just as the day arrived for celebrating their nuptials, the Yorkshire knight arrived at his brother's seat in Lancashire ; and was not a little surprised to find this maiden, whom the stars had portended so fatally, as he thought, to be his wife, alive, and so near becoming his kinswoman. The two brothers had a great altercation, and the Yorkshire knight succeeded at last in suspending the nuptials. The brother soon after died.” — *Old Tradition*.

“ They agreed to decide their difference by dropping the ring into the sea ; with this provision, that whenever Rebecca Russell could reproduce it to the knight, she should become his wife. — *Old Tradition*.

“ Mr. Elton had allied himself by marriage to a lady of high birth, whose accomplishments might have embellished the greatest scenes, had not a love of domestic life induced her to prefer retirement to the splendours of a court.” — *Old Tradition*.

“ Mr. Elton survived his wife but a short time ; and, after his death, a monument was erected to perpetuate the memory of the *Fish* and the *Ring*, on the east side of Stepney church.” — *Old Tradition*.

It is a plain tablet, on which is inscribed,

Here lyeth interred,
The body of Dame REBECCA BERRY,
The wife of Thomas Elton of Stratford-le-Bow,
Gent.

Who departed this life April 26, 1696.

Aged fifty-two years.

Come, ladies, you that would appear
Like angels fair, come dress you here ;
Come, dress you at this marble stone,
And make that marble grace your own ;

Which once adorned as fair a mind
As ever lodged in woman kind ;
So was she dress'd, whose humble life
Was free from pride, was free from strife ;
Free from all envious broils and jars,
Of human life the civil wars :
These ne'er disturb'd her peaceful mind,
Which still was gentle, still was kind.
Her very looks, her garb, her mien,
Disclos'd the humble soul within.
Trace her through every scene of life ;
View her as widow, virgin, wife ;
Still the same humble she appears,
The same in youth, the same in years ;
The same in low, in high estate ;
Ne'er vex'd with this, ne'er mov'd with that.
Go, ladies, now, and if you be
As fair, as great, as good as she,
Go learn of her humility.

THE END.

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